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Note verbale dated 13 February 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to refer to General Assembly resolution 69/196, "International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and Other Related Offences", adopted on 18 December 2014, and in particular to Guideline 2 of the resolution, which provides as follows:

> States should consider, where possible under their national legislation, the relevant cultural property as registered in the official inventory of a State that has enacted laws on national or State ownership, provided that the owner State has issued a public formal statement to that effect.

Pursuant to this Guideline, the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations wishes to communicate the following formal statement to the United Nations Secretariat:

> Formal statement on national ownership of archaeological property, issued in accordance with Guideline 2 of the International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and Other Related Offences (General Assembly resolution 69/196)
>
> The United Mexican States declares that, as from the entry into force of the relevant protection legislation, all archaeological resources produced by cultures predating the establishment of the Hispanic culture in the territory under its jurisdiction belong to the Mexican nation.

The Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations requests that this note verbale be circulated to the States Members of the Organization and to the relevant bodies.

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Letter dated 16 April 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly

1. The present letter on the work of the United Nations in response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa covers developments from 1 March to 1 April 2015, the 180-day mark since the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER). It records activities carried out by my Special Envoy on Ebola and UNMEER and provides an update on progress made in the Ebola response pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/1 since my update of 13 March 2015 (A/69/812).

Current situation of the Ebola outbreak

2. As at 31 March 2015, a total of 25,449 confirmed, probable and suspected cases of Ebola had been reported in three currently affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) and in six previously affected countries (Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America). A cumulative total of 10,498 confirmed, probable and suspected deaths have been reported.

3. In Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, there was a marked decline in the weekly confirmed case incidence, from almost 500 cases per week in December to fewer than 100 cases per week by late January. Since then, incidence has fluctuated between 70 and 160 cases per week in the region. In March, the weekly case incidence in Guinea fluctuated between 45 and 95 cases with no discernible trend; however, the incidence in Sierra Leone has steadily declined since late February, from 81 to 25 cases reported in the week ending 29 March.

4. The geographical area of active transmission has also narrowed significantly since January 2015. Whereas 27 districts reported at least one confirmed case in January, 16 districts reported a case in March, with almost all transmission now taking place in a coastal arc in and around Conakry and Freetown. In March, the western préfectures of Conakry, Coyah and Forécariah accounted for 89 per cent of confirmed cases in Guinea. Siguiri, a préfecture in northeastern Guinea reported two confirmed cases on 26 March after not having reported a case for nearly two months. In Sierra Leone, Freetown and the nearby districts of Bombali, Kambia, Port Loko and Western Rural accounted for 98 per cent of all confirmed cases in March. Seven of 14 districts have not reported a confirmed case in the past 21 days.

5. The epicentre of the initial outbreak, in the tri-border area around the Guinean préfecture of Guéckédou, the Liberian county of Lofa and the Sierra Leonean

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district of Kailahun, has now been Ebola-free for over 90 days. In addition, it has been more than 21 days since the last confirmed case from the Guinea Forestière region, which includes the préfectures of Guéckédou, Macenta, N'Zérékoré and Lola. Further restricting the geographical area of transmission to more easily accessible areas will be particularly important as the rainy season approaches.

6. One confirmed Ebola case was reported on 20 March in Montserrado County, Liberia. Before that confirmed case, Liberia had experienced 28 consecutive days without reporting a single case. The case is currently being investigated for the possibility of sexual transmission. This highlights the importance of continued vigilance and strengthened surveillance, even in districts that have not recently reported cases.

Progress towards ending transmission

Overall assessment

7. The recent decline in case incidence and contraction of the geographical area of transmission give grounds for continued optimism that the outbreak is on its way to being brought under control, although there will be many challenges before it comes to a definitive end. Although transmission is currently confined to a relatively narrow geographic corridor, the populations in and around the affected areas of Conakry and Freetown are highly mobile. Therefore, there is a strong focus on enhancing community detection and alert systems through active surveillance in all districts throughout the three affected countries, including Ebola-free districts. The World Health Organization (WHO) Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response system is being used as a framework to improve existing systems and will enable the investigation and testing of suspected Ebola cases at the county, district and préfecture levels.

8. In addition, all three countries have taken steps to reinforce cross-border collaboration in compliance with the International Health Regulations. A memorandum of understanding between Guinea and Sierra Leone has been drafted with the intention of fostering closer collaboration between Kambia and Forécariah and strengthening joint cross-border activities such as surveillance, contact tracing and social mobilization.

Progress towards meeting key targets and related challenges

9. In the context of declining case incidence and a shrinking area of transmission in Liberia and Sierra Leone, WHO, in coordination with relevant Government ministries and partners, has started to plan for the safe decommissioning of surplus Ebola treatment units. Each country will retain a core capacity of high-quality strategically located Ebola treatment units to ensure complete geographic coverage, with additional rapid response capacity held in reserve. No facilities will be closed until a nearby district health-care facility can safely assume responsibility for triage and isolation or referral. Given the more precarious epidemiological situation in Guinea, the decommissioning of Ebola treatment units has not yet commenced. Two Ebola treatment units opened on 1 March in Kindia and Beyla préfectures in Guinea. In March, 13 health-care workers were infected with Ebola in Guinea and 8 in Sierra Leone.

10. In Sierra Leone, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and partners have also begun to work with communities to scale down bed capacities and

decommission a small number of community care centres in low-risk areas. However, the majority of community care centres will continue to operate and support affected communities. There continues to be sufficient capacity at the national level to conduct safe burials, with 74 burial teams active in Guinea, 80 in Liberia and 129 in Sierra Leone.

11. Rigorous case investigation and contact tracing are crucial to further curb the spread of Ebola and ensure that new cases stem only from registered contacts. In March, 96 per cent of registered contacts, with an average of 2,383 contacts under follow-up, were traced daily. Following the confirmation of a single case in Liberia in March, 185 contacts are currently under follow-up. In Sierra Leone, over the same period, 98 per cent of registered contacts, with an average of 7,143 contacts under follow-up, were traced daily. During March, the average number of newly registered contacts per confirmed case was 20 in Guinea, 185 in Liberia and 15 in Sierra Leone.

12. The percentage of new confirmed and probable cases arising from registered contacts in Guinea was 43 per cent on average in March. In Sierra Leone, an average of 69 per cent of new confirmed and probable cases originated from registered contacts. However, in both countries, there is considerable regional variation in the figures.

13. Currently, the number of laboratories in all three countries represents sufficient clinical capacity. Between 1 and 31 March, the number of operational laboratories, coordinated by WHO, increased from 7 to 9 in Guinea, while the number remained constant at 5 in Liberia and 13 in Sierra Leone. During March, 1,764 samples were tested in Guinea, 421 (24 per cent) of which tested positive for Ebola. By comparison, 6,452 samples were tested in Sierra Leone, 172 (3 per cent) of which tested positive. Of the 1,045 samples tested in Liberia, 1 tested positive for Ebola. Over the reporting period, more than 99 per cent of samples from suspected and probable cases in Guinea, 86 to 91 per cent in Liberia and 87 to 90 per cent in Sierra Leone were tested within one day of collection.

14. Effective community engagement remains a challenge in several geographical areas, particularly in Guinea and Sierra Leone. The number of security incidents in Guinea decreased slightly, but 7 out of 34 préfectures reported at least one security incident or other form of refusal to cooperate in March. Six of the seven préfectures (Boffa, Conakry, Coyah, Dubreka, Forécariah and Kindia) that reported a confirmed Ebola case in the four weeks up to 29 March also reported at least one incident of resistance. Low levels of reported and perceived community resistance and hostility towards survivors and orphans persist in Liberia and Sierra Leone, with at least one security incident reported during the month of March in Sierra Leone. Recent anthropological assessments facilitated by WHO have provided important insights into the root causes of resistance, allowing for more targeted community engagement and greater community access. This has led to the identification of some cases that would not otherwise have been detected.

15. Despite sufficient capacity to conduct safe burials at the national level, unsafe burials continue to be reported. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, 77 and 4 unsafe burials were reported, respectively, in March. A total of 32 and 69 new confirmed cases were identified in Guinea and Sierra Leone, respectively, in March following post-mortem testing of individuals who had died in the community. While that represents a decrease from February, it nonetheless indicates that a significant number of

individuals continue to be either unable or unwilling to seek diagnosis and treatment. Of the 161 Ebola-positive deaths reported in Guinea during March, 69 occurred in the community. By contrast, a smaller proportion, 32 of 253 Ebola-positive deaths, occurred in the community in Sierra Leone.

Update on the operational activities carried out by the United Nations system through the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response and its partners

16. The global Ebola response continues to galvanize partners to assist the national Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in their efforts to reach a resilient zero Ebola transmission. The two German Air Force C160s donated to the UNMEER response ended their Accra-based cargo transport services on 31 March; this airlift capacity has transported a total of 736 metric tons of relief supplies since October. The Air Coordination Cell in Copenhagen also ended its coordination and oversight services at the end of February.

17. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies continued to work with national Red Cross Societies as the lead partner in safe and dignified burials in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Guinean Red Cross launched a sensitization campaign "*Des mots contre Ebola*" ("Words against Ebola") to sustain awareness efforts. The Sierra Leonean Red Cross carried out an average of 450 safe and dignified burials per week in all districts. In Liberia, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Liberian Red Cross carried out 125 safe and dignified burials and disinfected 58 households in March. Despite zero cases in Liberia, safe and dignified burials of unconfirmed cases are carried out irrespective of final diagnosis to ensure that safe protocols are always followed, even when laboratory tests later demonstrate a negative Ebola result.

18. As a result of gains made in Liberia, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Liberian Red Cross initiated discussions with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare on scaling down Red Cross engagement in safe and dignified burial activities, while maintaining the capacity to sustain response efforts.

19. Médecins Sans Frontières continues to actively respond to the Ebola epidemic in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, with more than 4,500 staff working in the region. In the past year, the organization has opened 15 Ebola management and transit centres, 5 of which are currently operational, and the sixth, "ELWA 3" in Liberia, is being handed over to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. Médecins Sans Frontières teams continue to conduct surveillance, contact tracing and social mobilization activities. Since the onset of the outbreak, more than 8,000 patients have been admitted to the organization's Ebola management centres, with nearly 5,000 confirmed positive for Ebola.

United Nations system

20. Over the reporting period, UNMEER and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), intensified their efforts in support of government response institutions and relevant line ministries, with a dual focus on accelerating response interventions while concurrently installing the systems, measures and infrastructure to support the sustainability of national response efforts moving forward.

21. In Guinea, UNMEER and partners supported the National Ebola Response Cell by undertaking follow-up field missions and strengthening coordination activities, such as the establishment of an Ebola response task force for Conakry, in identified priority areas, including the préfectures of Conakry, Forécariah, Faranah and Mamou. UNMEER and the National Ebola Response Cell implemented a new deployment plan for the 25 field crisis managers and information management officers aligned with the areas where cases are currently concentrated. UNMEER and partners also provided support to local authorities to establish an operations centre in Forécariah to coordinate response efforts in order to provide real-time responses and integrated implementation of the lines of action.

22. In view of community resistance in Guinea, UNMEER facilitated a Government-led eight-day campaign "*Ebola ça suffit*" (Enough Ebola) funded by the Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund to reinforce social mobilization efforts, enhance community participation and reduce stigmatization of Ebola survivors. UNMEER, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), facilitated a stakeholders' forum bringing together political and religious leaders, media, syndicate representatives and civil society actors who declared their collective commitment to the fight against Ebola as a national priority.

23. To facilitate enhanced integration of community engagement with contact tracing, UNMEER is distributing 832 cell phones to support contact tracing and mobile data-collection activities undertaken by community watch committees in priority areas. In addition, four ambulances were donated to the National Ebola Response Cell and one to the Guinean Red Cross to enable the rapid transfer of Ebola cases to Ebola treatment units. UNMEER made available 74 donated motorbikes to facilitate contact tracing. UNMEER and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service also transported a laboratory from Kerouane to Forécariah for the French Red Cross.

24. In Liberia, UNMEER continued to support nationally led efforts to consolidate response gains by maintaining capacity and assisting local authorities to establish systems to ensure robust vigilance. UNMEER is supporting community initiatives that will expand the implementation of the lines of actions in an integrated manner to include support to essential services. With funding support from the Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, UNMEER approved 67 community-based projects of up to $5,000 each, for a total of $270,488.13, for implementation in Montserrado County. Twenty community-based projects will directly enable the efforts of the county health teams to conduct various Ebola mitigation and prevention activities, including cross-border surveillance and the rehabilitation of health-care facilities and schools.

25. UNMEER is implementing a transition road map, which outlines priority tasks, milestones and timelines for its handover to national and United Nations country team partners. As it implements its transition, UNMEER continues to recalibrate its approach to the situation on the ground. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat will provide liaison support among UNMEER, the Resident Coordinator and key Ebola responders, as well as humanitarian clusters, in the handover. The efforts by UNMEER to support the restoration of essential services are being integrated into the Resident Coordinator's office, with the Resident Coordinator officially assuming the coordination of Ebola response efforts by 30 April. A residual UNMEER strength will be maintained for liquidation and handover functions until 31 May.

26. In Sierra Leone, UNMEER, in partnership with the National Ebola Response Centre and other response partners, has developed a rapid response surge fund, with funding from the Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, to establish a rapid response stabilization team to assist the National Ebola Response Centre in responding to Ebola flare-ups. An initial allocation of $500,000 was made available to support this initiative, which responds to a critical gap in the "getting to zero" strategy and has already been instrumental in supporting National and District Ebola Response Centre efforts in Port Loko, Kambia and Kono. To strengthen the National Ebola Response Centre, UNMEER provided funding to augment its staffing levels through 31 May. UNMEER also provided support to government response efforts in the districts by funding 27 community-based projects totalling $624,167, with support from the Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

27. In support of Sierra Leone's three-day "stay at home' campaign from 27 to 29 March, UNMEER, in collaboration with the World Bank and UNICEF, provided funding support to the National Ebola Response Centre to assist in the facilitation of the campaign, which included house-to-house interventions for active case finding. During the campaign, partners collaborated to ensure that the basic needs of identified vulnerable groups (street children, disabled persons and the urban poor) were met. Together with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the World Food Programme (WFP) provided food and logistics support for community kitchens to reach street children and the disabled, while a distribution mechanism was established in informal settlements in the capital.

28. Additionally, UNMEER and partners are supporting the efforts of district Ebola response centres and district health management teams through funding for quarantine team operations to ensure follow-up on all potential cases.

29. Meanwhile, to enable front-line responders, UNMEER has donated 44 vehicles to the National Ebola Response Centre and one to the Ebola Treatment Unit of the Italian non-governmental organization Emergency. An additional 55 vehicles are being processed for donation, of which 40 will be donated to the National Ebola Response Centre and 15 to the operation "African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa". In addition, a number of vehicles have been loaned to support the response efforts of non-governmental partners, including six to International Medical Corps, seven to Partners in Health, three to the Sustainable Nutrition and Agriculture Promotion programme of the United States Agency for International Development, three to eHealth and eight to GOAL.

30. In Mali, UNMEER transitioned its responsibilities to government and United Nations agency, fund and programme partners. Following the official end of the

Ebola outbreak on 18 January, UNMEER officially closed its office in Mali on 31 March and handed over renovated and fully equipped office facilities to the Government.

31. In March, WHO had 782 staff deployed in 70 locations across the three affected countries and Mali. As at 24 March, there had been more than 2,000 deployments through WHO across Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Approximately 300 of those deployed are epidemiologists, who continue to oversee the strengthening of case investigation and surveillance activities. In response to the requests of the national Governments, approximately 47 per cent of WHO staff are deployed in Guinea, 21 per cent in Liberia and 27 per cent in Sierra Leone. WHO intends to sustain this presence beyond the end of the outbreak to ensure sufficient surveillance capacity.

32. Through WHO, the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network has continued to provide international technical assistance for nationally led response efforts in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. WHO has mobilized 530 Network experts since the initial deployments in March 2014. Network experts and teams are providing support for critical response functions, including surveillance, contact tracing, infection prevention and control, laboratory diagnosis and coordination, and case management. At the end of March, WHO deployed 81 experts from the Network in the field, including 45 in Guinea, 7 in Liberia and 29 in Sierra Leone.

33. In late March, WHO and Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network partners held an operational workshop in Conakry to review the deployment and coordination of WHO and Network support in key préfectures and proposed recommendations to address technical and operational priorities, strengthen WHO support and coordination activities and identify additional entry points. The workshop also presented the development of a WHO/Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network contact tracing support tool.

34. WHO continues to coordinate all 56 deployed foreign medical teams and to provide technical assistance. WHO provided technical support to countries with regard to the decontamination and decommissioning of Ebola treatment units, including through the development of a guidance document. In response to requests from affected countries, representatives of WHO, ministries of health and key technical partners met in Freetown in March to finalize guidance to the countries. Simultaneously, a WHO team of decommissioning and foreign medical team operations experts and water, sanitation and hygiene engineers commenced onsite support to national authorities in Liberia and Sierra Leone to facilitate country plans for the safe decommissioning of surplus Ebola treatment units.

35. On 17 March, WHO and the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare launched a five-day train-the-trainers course for the new Ebola training package, designed to empower Liberia's 10,000 facility-based health-care workers to remain safe while providing quality health care.

36. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to provide operational support to emergency Ebola response efforts. In the second phase of the immediate response, the Office will continue to play a key role through the transition and has deployed additional staff to reinforce its new country offices in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Their primary function will be to support and strengthen the current coordination architecture and help to identify and address

immediate needs generated by the Ebola outbreak. The Office will also support the seamless handover of UNMEER responsibilities to United Nations country teams, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinators, and the gradual transition from the immediate response to recovery.

37. In Sierra Leone, UNMEER is elaborating a transition plan with the aim of outlining a coordinated transfer of functions to the Resident Coordinator and United Nations agency, fund and programme partners, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and strengthening national capacities in preparation for a full transition by 31 July 2015. The Office has provided expert advice and input to a 60-day "getting to zero" operational plan jointly led by the National Ebola Response Centre and UNMEER.

38. In Guinea, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reopened its office on 3 March, which is co-located with UNMEER. The Office plans to augment its team to support field coordination and information management both for the immediate Ebola response and to respond to attendant urgent sectoral needs. In the short term, the Office will provide support to UNMEER and the United Nations country team. It has also assumed the management and secretariat support functions for the Emergency Ebola Response Team, which is jointly chaired by UNMEER and the Resident Coordinator, and is resuming inter-sector coordination for cluster groups in Guinea and updating information management tools and information-sharing platforms for response actors.

39. With the reopening of Liberia's borders, UNMEER, WHO, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are working with the Government to enhance the capacity of its border personnel, preposition key resources along checkpoints and engage with communities to encourage monitoring.

40. In Liberia, IOM has supported the Grand Cape Mount Task Force to prevent county cross-border transmission. IOM provided training to county border authorities on infection prevention and control measures, with a focus on key cross-county checkpoints and markets in several counties. The IOM Ebola treatment unit teams in Bomi and Grand Bassa Counties have been assisting the county health teams in providing community health-care services through mobile clinics in remote areas.

41. In Sierra Leone, IOM continues to work with implementation partners on the distribution of emergency care kits and related training in Western Area, Port Loko and Bombali districts. IOM implementation partners are rolling out their social mobilization activities in Kono and Bombali districts.

42. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued to support case searching in Liberia and provided training to 769 contact tracers using the national standard operation procedures. In Sierra Leone, UNFPA and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation jointly trained 4,956 contact tracers. In Guinea, UNFPA works with 518 contact tracers. UNFPA has established a partnership with Columbia University to roll out "CommCare", an enhanced version of contact tracing that utilizes smartphones with Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking to report the location of contacts in real time and with geographical precision. This approach is being piloted in the five communes of Conakry and in the préfectures of Dubreka and Coyah, with 158 contact tracers. UNFPA also works with 132 village committees,

comprised of 804 members, in seven préfectures in Guinea to support social mobilization activities.

43. WFP is supporting the WHO-led district-by-district approach through the WHO-WFP Joint Collaboration Initiative, whereby WHO is leveraging WFP support, field presence and subnational logistics infrastructure to launch operations across 60 remote field locations, including 18 priority districts across the region. In Liberia, WFP is assisting the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare with the prepositioning of personal protective equipment at health-care facilities throughout the country. In Sierra Leone, to prepare for the potential medical evacuation of Ebola symptomatic patients, WFP has been facilitating the transportation of Ebola bio-bag medical isolation units, prepositioned in Freetown.

44. WFP is providing support to the supply, packing, kitting and dispatch of essential items for the Ebola response. The United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot in Accra continues to assemble and dispatch personal protective equipment kits on behalf of WHO throughout the three affected countries as a key preparedness measure and to support responders in the demobilization of equipment. Additionally, WFP is adapting its operational priorities in line with the UNMEER transition plan, including by assuming part of the UNMEER air transport services. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service will incorporate more assets into its fleet in April 2015, replacing the UNMEER services once the latter's helicopters are decommissioned. In March 2015, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service and UNMEER jointly flew 3,233 passengers. Since August 2014, the Air Service has transported over 10,000 passengers across the region, and UNMEER has transported over 9,500 passengers since October 2014. WFP will also absorb part of the UNMEER information, communications and technology services, ensuring that connectivity is maintained at 19 main logistics bases and forward logistics bases across the affected countries. The current emergency telecommunications cluster is providing Internet access in over 60 locations to more than 2,000 users.

45. UNICEF continues to work with partners to support communities with active surveillance and community care centre referrals. In March, social mobilizers had referred nearly 100 per cent of cases in community care centres in Kambia district of Sierra Leone. In response to the single confirmed Ebola case in Caldwell district of Monrovia, UNICEF deployed 20 additional general community health-care workers to conduct a mop-up campaign in the neighbouring communities.

46. In Guinea, social mobilizers continue to reach around 12,000 individuals per week through household and school visits. UNICEF has organized 36 community forums in areas that were resistant to the response and has also established functional partner platforms in hotspot areas, supporting the strengthening of control measures at strategic border checkpoints. Accessing remote communities in Guinea remains a challenge, making radios indispensable in efforts to reach those communities. During the reporting period, UNICEF provided support and equipment to the rehabilitation of local radio stations in Forécariah, Lola and Yomou.

47. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) monitored judiciary proceedings following security incidents related to Ebola. In Boffa, the tribunal sentenced 7 suspects for up to six months and acquitted 39 after an attack on UNICEF. The trial of suspects in the Womey (Nzérekoré)

incident, during which eight officials were killed while on a sensitization mission, was due to start in March.

48. In Sierra Leone, OHCHR worked with the National Ebola Response Centre prior to the "stay at home" awareness campaign to ensure the safe and unhindered movement of national human rights monitors. By wearing visible and identifiable non-governmental organization logos and having a dedicated National Ebola Response Centre helpline number to use in the event of being stopped, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone and human rights monitors were able to move freely.

49. Under the Payment Programme for Ebola Response Workers, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with funding from the Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, worked with partners to support the registration of 95 to 100 per cent (approximately 38,000) of Ebola response workers across the three affected countries. More than 90 per cent of registered Ebola response workers are being paid on time. In Guinea, UNDP supported the harmonization of payment policies to facilitate payments to 7,000 Ebola response workers. Since December 2014, UNDP Guinea has managed the direct payment of incentives to over 1,400 Ebola response workers from three international non-governmental organizations. In a pilot test, UNDP created individual bank accounts for Ebola response worker beneficiaries for one non-governmental organization, into which payments were made. In view of its success, the scheme will be expanded to include other Ebola response worker beneficiaries.

50. Taking note of the evolving nature of the epidemic and the beginning of transition and recovery planning across all three countries, UNDP convened a workshop with partners in Dakar from 3 to 5 March that sought to document progress on the payments programme. Participants underscored that the Payment Programme for Ebola Response Workers should continue where necessary to ensure that workers are paid as required to stop Ebola transmission. It was advised that successor programmes, particularly in public health strengthening and epidemic monitoring, make use of human capacity and systems developed in the Payment Programme for Ebola Response Workers.

51. As part of the $518 million committed by the World Bank Group to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone over the past six months, the Group disbursed around $28 million in March to support the Governments of the three countries in strengthening their national responses. The Governments have used the resources in part to finance bilateral contracts with a number of their implementing partners, including UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, the United Nations Office for Project Services and WFP.

52. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, World Bank Group-financed support has enabled the procurement of supplies through UNICEF, including nutritional and therapeutic commodities for Ebola treatment units, infection prevention and control kits, vehicles to support contact tracing and social mobilization, water, sanitation and hygiene kits and nationwide social mobilization campaigns; technical assistance through WHO; and the procurement of over 6,500 metric tons of cereals for beneficiaries in affected areas through WFP. World Bank Group funding has also helped to support the expansion of UNFPA contact tracing and monitoring activities. In Liberia, the World Bank Group's support has financed the procurement of

laboratory equipment, medical supplies through WHO and the procurement of over 4,000 metric tons of food supplies through WFP.

53. The World Bank Group also began to provide support to the rebuilding of non-health-related essential services in the three countries, including through targeted cash transfer systems for impoverished and Ebola-affected households, seed supplies for farmers, supplies of secondary education materials and psychosocial support for Ebola survivors. In a concerted push to revive agriculture and avert hunger in Ebola-stricken countries, the World Bank Group has mobilized up to $15 million in emergency financing to provide a record 10,500 tons of maize and rice seed to more than 200,000 farmers ahead of the April planting season.

Activities of the Special Envoy on Ebola

54. My Special Envoy has continued to provide strategic leadership and guidance to the responder community, including through weekly meetings of the Global Ebola Response Coalition. Within the Coalition, maximizing the contributions of all stakeholders, including the private sector through the participation of the Ebola Private Sector Mobilization Group, to the shared objective of eliminating the outbreak has been a particular focus. To support resource mobilization and advocacy efforts, my Special Envoy travelled to several capitals to meet with key response stakeholders.

55. During the month of March, the Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, which is managed by my Special Envoy, received deposits totalling $2.04 million, bringing total deposits in the Fund to $138.9 million. Of that amount, $123.21 million has been disbursed to nine United Nations entities, including the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNMEER, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), WFP and WHO. The Fund has allocated funding for district surveillance (UNDP, UNFPA and WHO), logistics and transport (WFP), community care centres (UNICEF), social mobilization (UNICEF and WHO), strengthening of the Payment Programme for Ebola Response Workers (UNDP), strengthening of national response capacities (UNMEER and the United Nations Office for Project Services), airport preparedness and technical assistance training (ICAO), support to the Mano River Union confidence-building units (Mano River Union, UNDP) and payment and capacity development in respect of Ebola survivors (UNDP and UN-Women).

Building resilience and supporting recovery

Ebola recovery assessment

56. The European Union high-level conference on the theme "Ebola: From emergency to recovery", which was held on 3 March in Brussels, was co-chaired by the Presidents of Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo, the African Union and the United Nations. I was represented by my UNDP Administrator, with my Special Envoy providing technical expertise. The conference was designed to arrive at a common strategy to end the Ebola epidemic and to address post-Ebola recovery needs. In the final statement of the conference, all parties in the Ebola response reaffirm their commitment to the comprehensive strategy for "getting to and staying at zero", with a key outcome being the agreement to develop a regional approach to recovery. Following on from the conference, in mid-March, the Mano River Union

and the Governments of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone worked together to develop the Mano River Union's subregional Ebola recovery strategy and the framework for the establishment and management of a regional Ebola recovery fund. In the meantime, work has also continued on their own national recovery strategies.

57. The early recovery assessment partners will continue to support the Mano River Union and affected countries, including in strengthening the regional strategy, which will be presented during the World Bank Group spring meetings, from 17 to 19 April. Support is being offered to facilitate the costing of the Mano River Union's regional recovery strategy. Other follow-up support actions will be determined following the World Bank Group meetings, with the broader objective of helping the countries and the region to present coherent, complementary and fully costed recovery strategies as a basis for strengthening partnerships with international partners in the recovery effort.

Non-Ebola health care

58. WHO has worked with each affected country to strengthen its infection prevention and control measures at the national and subnational levels. As a result, the first infection prevention and control national guidelines for Sierra Leone are being finalized for release in April. In Guinea and Liberia, WHO is providing support to health-care facilities on appropriate structures, processes and guidelines for performance improvement in infection prevention and control. Ongoing assessments by WHO and its partners of non-Ebola health-care facilities have highlighted gaps of concern in safety practices. For example, in Montserrado, Liberia, of 113 private and public non-Ebola health-care facilities assessed for infection prevention and control standards, only 45 per cent met the minimum standards. Since December 2014, 53 Ebola health-care facilities in Sierra Leone have undergone infection prevention and control assessments, 57 per cent of which met minimum standards. WHO is also working with donor partners to establish active surveillance capacities that will be fully integrated into the national Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response system.

59. WHO is supporting the three affected countries to develop robust national recovery plans aimed at building resilient health-care systems. WHO is also helping the three countries to prepare an analysis of the health workforce situation against projected health needs and their cost implications to inform national investment plans. In Liberia, WHO supported the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare with an analysis that makes the case for bringing 41 per cent of the public sector health workforce who are not on the payroll onto the government payroll through an emergency hiring and management plan.

60. Towards the restoration of essential health-care services, WHO is currently developing an integrated approach to reactivate health-care services in each of the affected countries, with a specific focus on immunizations, malarial prevention and treatment, infant and children's health, reproductive health and ensuring that health-care systems are resilient in the face of future health threats. Guidance for immunization programmes in West Africa in the context of Ebola has also been issued, which includes plans for catch-up vaccination campaigns to deal with the immunization delivery shortfall during the peak of the Ebola outbreak.

61. The measles outbreak in Boké region, Guinea, is a visible manifestation of the challenges facing non-Ebola health care. Following that outbreak, UNICEF and partners undertook an immunization campaign to ensure coverage and access to remote areas, which has since been expanded nationwide. Similar measles immunization activities are being planned in Sierra Leone and in Liberia, in addition to targeted community engagement strategies to address community resistance. In Liberia, reported suspected cases of whooping cough in Maryland County are currently being assessed.

62. The World Bank Group is supporting the rebuilding of essential health-care services, in line with national recovery plans, through facility upgrades, equipment and supplies for obstetric and other care, immunization campaigns, infection prevention and control, clinical training, outreach and referral transport. Financial support is also being channelled to Sierra Leone for the development of a national health-care system rebuilding plan.

63. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, UNFPA is supporting the strengthening of the reproductive health commodity supply chain, contributing to strengthening maternal health-care service delivery, revamping emergency obstetric and neonatal care services and increasing access to family planning and reproductive health-care services. In Liberia, clinical assistance delivery kits were procured and delivered to facilities serving upwards of 150,000 pregnant women. In Sierra Leone, UNFPA has engaged the First Lady in advocacy efforts to rebuild the trust of women and girls to utilize health-care facilities. In Guinea, UNFPA supported the recruitment and deployment of 50 midwives to the districts.

Protection

64. OHCHR continued to sensitize communities on the rights of Ebola survivors and to address survivors' stigma and discrimination. In addition, the protection cluster worked towards strengthening the transparency and accountability of social protection programmes for affected populations. The cluster facilitated broad and inclusive discussions on human rights and quarantine during the reporting period.

65. Across each of the three affected countries, a systematic verification exercise linked to the provision of the nationally agreed package of services (cash support, material assistance, psychosocial support, back-to-school supplies, referral for food assistance and social work follow-up) is being undertaken to validate the status of the more than 17,000 registered children having lost one or both parents or their primary caregivers. In Liberia, for example, 56 per cent, or 1,555, of the 2,781 registered children have received cash assistance. Strong traditions of extended family and kinship care for children have proved effective, with UNICEF estimating that fewer than 3 per cent of the children registered as having lost their parents are outside of family care. In Sierra Leone, of the 1,922 children identified for family tracing and reunification, 96 per cent, or 1,839 children, have been reunited with their families. In Guinea and Liberia, the number of children outside of family care is even smaller. In addition to targeted support to children who have lost their parents and caregivers, community-based child protection programmes are providing psychosocial support to other Ebola-affected children. In Guinea alone, 55,562 such children are receiving this support. The challenge now is to sustain these extended family care arrangements and ensure that the recovery process

includes a strong focus on strengthening national social welfare and child protection systems.

66. In Liberia, through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and national non-governmental organizations, UNFPA has funded the provision of dignity kits for women Ebola survivors and other vulnerable populations.

Education

67. Following the reopening of 16,000 schools in Guinea and Liberia this year, UNICEF and education partners are now focused on ensuring the safe reopening of 8,000 schools in Sierra Leone in mid-April. As in Guinea and Liberia, teachers are being trained in psychosocial support, infection prevention and control, social mobilization and protocol implementation. Hygiene supplies, infection prevention and control kits and thermometers have been provided to schools to facilitate the training.

68. To support the national back-to-school effort in Liberia, UNICEF has facilitated the establishment of a call centre at the Ministry of Education to collect baseline school reopening data. For example, 3,974 schools have received back-to-school kits containing infection prevention and control supplies procured by UNICEF and delivered through education cluster partners, including UNMIL. Meanwhile, 3,460 schools have had a teacher or administrator trained in the safe school reopening protocols by education cluster partners.

69. In Guinea, where schools reopened in January, Ministry of Education data suggest that 99.9 per cent of the country's 12,246 schools, which includes preschools, primary, secondary and tertiary schools, are now operational, with an 85 per cent enrolment rate. Social mobilizers are promoting the importance of hand washing and the use of no-contact thermometers. The WFP-led logistics cluster supported UNICEF with the distribution of over 2,000 "school-in-a-box" kits in the five préfectures of the Guinea Forestière region.

70. In Guinea, WFP is coordinating with Government authorities, UNICEF and other partners to continue to provide daily school meals in 844 schools and is planning to safely resume school meal programmes in Liberia. In Sierra Leone, WFP is working with UNICEF on the resumption of school meal programmes once schools reopen.

Economic impact, livelihoods and food security

71. Employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for the poor and vulnerable, have been negatively affected by the Ebola crisis. There has been a loss of income and income-generating opportunities, particularly for farmers and for traders involved in cross-border trade in the Mano River Union. The suspension of weekly community markets and the lull in construction activities has had significant adverse implications for employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for women, young people and poor rural households.

72. A moderate decline in food production has been observed, with agricultural activities in 2014 having been affected by border closures, restrictions on movement and a breakdown of the traditional labour-sharing system. Owing to disruptions in trade and transportation, post-harvest losses were also reported for perishable commodities. However, according to recent market and food security assessments in

all three countries, no major food shortages were observed in markets and international imports are functioning, although high staple food prices and low wages are hampering food access for the poorest households.

73. To date, WFP has assisted over 2.5 million beneficiaries across the three countries since the launch of its regional emergency operation. More than 60,000 metric tons of food have been transported and dispatched in the countries. WFP continues to support the health response through the provision of hot meals, food rations and cash support to Ebola patients, their caregivers, survivors, quarantined households and hotspot communities, and children orphaned by the outbreak. In 2015, WFP began providing reduced transfers (food or cash) to communities en route to becoming Ebola-free, but where access to food remained a significant challenge, with the purpose of kick-starting local livelihoods and markets.

74. In the light of the impending rainy season, WFP continues to prioritize the prepositioning of food and non-food items to ensure contingency stocks of sufficient supplies so that it is able to maintain the same level of operations over the next few months. WFP is structurally augmenting and reinforcing its established storage capacity, which currently amounts to almost 30,000 square metres in total capacity across the three affected countries.

75. In Liberia, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provided support to farmers to contribute to Ebola awareness campaigns and agricultural production through a financial agreement, which allowed them to recapitalize their savings and loans schemes.

76. In Guinea, FAO participates in the Ebola response through emergency support to the agricultural sector, funded by the World Bank Group. The project involves the purchase of seeds (vegetable, rice and corn), basic equipment for cultivation and farm animals, cash-for-work activities, social mobilization initiatives and the provision of hygiene kits to 30,000 households. In addition, FAO supports the resilience of Ebola-affected people through funding from the African Solidarity Trust Fund for Food Security. The project consists of acquiring essential agricultural inputs and farm animals and facilitating money transfers to enhance the livelihoods of 3,600 households across several préfectures and districts.

Preventing outbreaks in non-affected countries

77. WHO and its partners have undertaken country visits to strengthen preparedness in over 70 countries worldwide and have provided technical assistance support to 14 non-affected priority countries in the African region. The progress made by these priority countries in bolstering their preparedness is updated regularly and shared publicly on the WHO Ebola preparedness dashboard.

78. The Ebola preparedness dashboard illustrates clear progress in implementing minimum and additional requirement tasks set out on the Ebola preparedness checklist. At the end of March, the overall level of implementation in the 14 non-affected priority African countries averaged 32 per cent, compared with 20 per cent in December 2014. The areas of preparedness that have shown the most significant improvement are coordination, public awareness and surveillance, with increases of 18, 16 and 15 per cent, respectively, over the past three months.

79. WHO continued its deployment of preparedness strengthening teams in March, with four follow-up visits to Benin, the Gambia, Mauritania and Togo to provide

technical assistance and training in the coordination of emergency health operations, Ebola case management and infection prevention and control, outbreak logistics, contact tracing and surveillance. In the Eastern Mediterranean region, a rapid response four-day training and simulation exercise was held from 15 to 19 March for countries in the Middle East, North Africa, the Gulf and a few in the Horn of Africa in order to pilot a training package that will be used in the priority countries and also made available to all WHO regional offices.

80. A programme to roll out longer-term support is currently under development, with staff levels being increased in WHO country offices to coordinate preparedness activities. These efforts will be directly linked to strengthening the implementation of the International Health Regulations and to ensuring that the core capacities to manage health emergencies are at the heart of building resilient health-care systems. Towards that end, three Ebola preparedness officers took up their functions in priority countries in March.

81. WHO, in close collaboration with the World Bank Group, is developing a regional disease surveillance and preparedness system network in West Africa, with emphasis on infectious diseases and outbreaks. It is expected that the World Bank Group's spring meeting will further develop this initiative.

Way forward

82. The reporting period highlighted both the highs and lows in 2015 of the global response effort to get to zero, as well as a number of key challenges: Liberia progressed from single digit Ebola transmission rates throughout February to no new cases for three consecutive weeks, only to register a new Ebola case on 20 March. During March, Guinea and Sierra Leone recorded both the highest and lowest weekly number of cases for 2015, 150 and 79 cases per week, respectively; the incidence of Ebola infections was unpredictable and dispersed but increasingly confined to a smaller geographical area. While significant progress has been made in getting to zero, these factors indicate that this progress may not be linear and will require continued rigorous implementation of the agreed lines of action.

83. Representing the continued nimble and agile nature of UNMEER, my Special Representative has successfully facilitated the redeployment of UNMEER staff and other resources from Accra and Liberia in order to shift the Mission's footprint in response to epidemiological trends on the ground and substantially increase the footprint in Guinea and Sierra Leone, where predominant response needs remain. My Special Representative has adopted a roving role himself in shuttling between the affected countries as needed, spending the vast majority of his time in Guinea and Sierra Leone during the month of March. I welcome the efforts of my Special Representatives for UNMEER and UNOWA in facilitating the stakeholders' forum in Guinea to mobilize and secure an inclusive commitment to combat Ebola as a national priority. My Special Envoy and WHO continue to provide the strategic and technical direction, respectively, on the need to get to zero to help maintain focus among all responders to redouble their efforts ahead of the rainy season.

84. UNMEER continues to plan and implement activities with a view towards ensuring a seamless transfer of its functions to national authorities and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. In March, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, particularly WHO and WFP, adopted measures to scale up and expand their capacity and footprint. I welcome the surge deployments of WHO, which now has over 700 staff in 70 locations across the three affected countries and

Mali, approximately 300 of whom are epidemiologists. Assuming necessary funds can be obtained, WFP is planning to take over some of the operational and logistics functions of UNMEER so that services provided by UNMEER may continue to support response efforts. In March, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs enhanced its presence in all the affected countries and will work with the United Nations country teams under the auspices of the Resident Coordinators to lend operational and coordination support to immediate response efforts. UNMEER has concluded its operation in Mali and remains committed and on track to meeting the established timelines for the closure of its offices in Liberia by 31 May and Sierra Leone and Guinea by 31 July, with its overall liquidation by 31 August.

85. The way forward lies in achieving the two mutually reinforcing priorities of further reducing Ebola transmission ahead of the rainy season and transitioning UNMEER responsibilities and functions to national and United Nations agency, fund and programme partners in a seamless and coordinated manner to leave no gaps behind where the virus can continue to spread. Too much has been invested and too much sacrificed to do anything less than everything possible to bring the epidemic to a definitive end. The immediate priority is to continue to assist the Governments of the affected countries to get to and stay at a resilient zero transmission.

86. The plans of UNMEER to transition its functions to national and United Nations agency, fund and programme partners would be greatly enhanced if sufficient resources were available to enable the scaling up of their capacities. To date, the Ebola response overview of needs and requirements, totalling $1.5 billion, has a funding gap of around $850 million, of which $400 million is urgently required. As a means of financing and overcoming key obstacles to the response, the Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund has been invaluable and needs to be replenished. The generosity to date in the global Ebola response has been tremendous and this massive mobilization in solidarity with the affected countries has made it possible to avert the worst-case scenarios feared only a few months ago. More is needed, however, to bring the epidemic to a definitive end and support the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in scaling up to sustain the response effort and commence recovery activities in an integrated manner. I urge all countries in a position to do so to contribute more.

87. I thank President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, President Alpha Condé of Guinea and President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone for the national leadership that they have provided to the global Ebola response effort. In particular, I welcome recent national efforts, including President Condé's address to his nation on 28 March and President Koroma's "stay at home" initiative, to guard against any popular inclination towards complacency by remaining focused on bringing the outbreak under control ahead of the rainy season. Earlier in the month, in the context of the European Union's high-level conference, President Johnson Sirleaf called upon the international community to stay the course until all three affected countries have reached a resilient zero. I echo her sentiments. This assembly of nations has acted in a true spirit of solidarity with the affected countries throughout this unprecedented crisis, demonstrating the strength that we bring to bear as a global community when there is unity of purpose and collective will. Let us continue to stand with the affected countries and bring this crisis to a lasting end.

88. I would be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the General Assembly.

United Nations A/69/872–S/2015/236

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
17 April 2015
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session
Agenda items 68 (c) and 107

Security Council
Seventieth year

Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Identical letters dated 3 April 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan rejects in whole and in part the false allegations and unacceptable accusations made against Jordan in the identical letters dated 2 April 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Syria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council regarding the recent developments in the Palestine refugee camp of Yarmouk.

Jordan stresses that the Syrian Government bears full responsibility for the Syrian crisis, the suffering of the civilians in Syria and the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation caused by its actions. The Syrian Government has committed serious violations of human rights principles and international humanitarian law, and has carried out systematic crimes against its own people in all their diverse components. It has facilitated the spread of terrorism and extremism. It has besieged certain areas, denying access to humanitarian and medical assistance in an act of collective punishment against its own people.

Accordingly, Jordan calls on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to bring pressure to bear on the Syrian Government to end its violations and comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2199 (2015); the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 69/189; and international humanitarian law and human rights principles.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 68 (c) and 107, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dina **Kawar**
Permanent Representative

15-06108 (E) 210415 220415

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Agenda items 68 (c) and 107

Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical notes verbales dated 14 April 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations kindly requests the circulation of the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 68 (c) and 107, and of the Security Council (see annex).

15-06116 (E) 200415 200415

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Annex to the identical notes verbales dated 14 April 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

The security, political and humanitarian situation in Syria has continued to deteriorate as a result of the Syrian regime's daily acts of barbarism against its own people. The regime has flagrantly and repeatedly violated the provisions of international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The regime's actions are now on the way to making Syria into a failed State, posing a threat to the security and stability of the region and of the world as a whole. Such practices have created a fertile environment for terrorism, and they are fanning the flames of extremism and sectarianism. The Permanent Mission of Syria to the United Nations is now exploiting the country's harsh reality to justify the regime's illegal practices against its own people, whose legitimate aspirations continue to be ignored. Instead, the Permanent Mission of Syria continues to make false allegations against those States that support a peaceful solution to the conflict in Syria and are working to alleviate the suffering of millions of their Syrian brethren.

The international community must be alert to the true nature of the Syrian regime's systematic crimes against the Syrian people in all its diverse components. Those crimes include the use of barrel bombs against civilians, as documented in United Nations reports. The regime has also besieged civilian areas and denied them access to humanitarian and medical assistance in an act of collective punishment.

The international community must deal firmly with the Syrian regime in order to bring an end to all of those violations and ensure compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2199 (2015); the resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolution 69/189; and international humanitarian law and human rights principles.

(*Signed*) Dina **Kawar**
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/69/874

General Assembly

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Agenda items 52 and 148

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Fifth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the fifth annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the global field support strategy, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/269 (A/69/651), concluding with written responses provided on 17 March 2015. The fifth progress report provides high-level information on the implementation and future direction of the global field support strategy and should be read in conjunction with annexes I and II to the report of the Secretary-General on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/69/751). The Committee also had before it, for information, the report of the Board of Auditors on peacekeeping operations for the period ended 30 June 2014 containing its observations and recommendations on the implementation of the global field support strategy (A/69/5 (Vol. II), paras. 252-359).

2. Other reports currently before the General Assembly also contain information and proposals related to the implementation of the global field support strategy, including the reports of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy (A/69/585; A/69/733/Rev.1) and on the client missions of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, Uganda, comprising the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (A/69/620; A/69/797), the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (A/69/549; A/69/808), the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) (A/69/611 and Corr.1; A/69/740), the United

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Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (A/69/677; A/69/800) and the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA) (A/69/592; A/69/728).

II. General observations and recommendations

3. The global field support strategy was proposed by the Secretary-General in 2010 with a five-year implementation horizon to transform service delivery to field missions and address the numerous challenges facing United Nations peacekeeping operations, drawing on the lessons learned over several decades of operational experience (A/64/633). The goals of the strategy were to enable timelier mission start-up and deployment, as well as to improve quality, efficiency and economy of scale in the delivery of services to field missions, including through the provision of common services. It was proposed that the strategy would be delivered through four implementation pillars in the following key field support areas: (a) financial framework and strategic resourcing; (b) human resources; (c) shared services (service centres); and (d) supply chain management and modularization.

4. In its resolution 64/269, the General Assembly noted the overall concept of the global field support strategy and provided guidance on its implementation. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit an annual progress report as recommended in paragraph 159 of the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/64/660). In addition to the Secretary-General's annual progress reports on the implementation of the global field support strategy and the related reports of the Advisory Committee, the Board of Auditors provides its observations and recommendations on progress made in its annual report on the financial statements of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. An audit of the implementation of the global field support strategy was conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in 2011 (see A/66/714).

5. Pursuant to a request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/264, in his third progress report the Secretary-General presented a first iteration of his end-state vision for the global field support strategy and indicated that the Secretariat had finalized a implementation plan for activities to be completed by 30 June 2015, at the end of the five-year implementation period of the strategy (A/67/633). Subsequently, in response to a recommendation of the Board of Auditors, the Secretary-General provided in his fourth progress report a refined end-state vision for the strategy and a performance framework for each of the strategy's pillars (A/68/637 and Corr.1; and A/68/731, annexes I and II). In that report, the Secretary-General indicated that the global field support strategy would end, as planned, in mid-2015 and the Organization would not seek an extension. Future performance improvement in field support would however be fully mainstreamed into the ongoing work of the Department of Field Support.

6. The current progress report is therefore the final progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy. The Secretary-General proposes to present reporting on future improvements in field support in his annual report on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General also indicates that his next overview report will contain more detailed reporting on benefits and performance in the implementation of the four pillars of the global field support strategy (see A/69/651, para. 2).

7. The Secretary-General indicates that his fifth progress report assesses achievements and lessons learned during the implementation of the global field support strategy, and also outlines the future approach for the continuous strengthening of United Nations field support beyond 2015. Further information on the implementation of the strategy is provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/69/751): annex I provides details on the implementation of each pillar of the global field support strategy during the 2013/14 period, including performance results against the global field support strategy pillar end states and benefits reporting; annex II provides consolidated information on the financial and human resources provided by client missions to the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/289.

8. In chapter II of its report on the financial statements of peacekeeping operations for the period ended 30 June 2014 (A/69/5 (Vol. II)), the Board of Auditors provides its assessment of the status of progress made towards the end-state vision of the global field support strategy to be achieved by 30 June 2015 and the realization of operational and financial benefits that are expected to accrue to the United Nations peacekeeping operations. A summary of the progress made under each pillar of the global field support strategy during 2013/14, including key activities and main areas of progress, is provided in table II.13 of the Board's report. The Board is of the view that progress should have been greater than was actually achieved, and that achievement of the end-state vision and key performance indicators by June 2015 is at risk. It recommends that the Secretariat take the steps necessary to ensure that the activities planned under the global field support strategy are completed by June 2015 so that the end-state vision and key performance indicators are fully achieved. The Board also highlights delays in developing the post-strategy implementation plans, tools and policies.

9. The Secretary-General states that not all achievements in each pillar will have been realized by June 2015 and that these will be pursued as priority tasks during 2015/16. In parallel, a major objective for 2015/16 will be the successful mainstreaming of the completed tools, structures and approaches of the global field support strategy into the ongoing work of the Secretariat. While noting the Secretariat's position that 30 June 2015 should not be regarded as the final deadline for implementation of changes, goals, tools and principles of the global field support strategy, the Board emphasizes the need to set target dates for activities related to global field support strategy mainstreaming and forward planning to ensure that the change process would continue. The Advisory Committee concurs with the Board in this regard.

10. **Accordingly, the Advisory Committee requests the Secretary-General to make every effort to fully implement the activities envisaged under the implementation plan. Given that in his next overview report the Secretary-General will report on progress achieved in the final year of the implementation of the global field support strategy (see para. 6 above), the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request him to provide for consideration at its seventieth session comprehensive information on the progress made towards the achievement of the end-state vision of the global field support strategy under all the pillars. The performance report should also identify and provide explanation on the targets that were not**

achieved and provide information on any plans for the implementation of those targets in the post-global field support strategy period.

11. **The Advisory Committee stresses the need to establish, at the five-year mark of this major initiative, a clear record of the goals, achievements and lessons learned as well as the costs incurred and benefits accrued. Such a record should be provided to the General Assembly not only for assessment of the implementation of the strategy, but also to facilitate the Assembly's consideration of future proposals related to the mainstreaming of the global field support strategy, as well as of other related initiatives such as the global service delivery model and the implementation of the United Nations information and communications technology strategy, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/262.**

12. In his report the Secretary-General outlines an approach for the future direction of field support and makes a series of proposals for consideration by the General Assembly. The Assembly is requested (a) to approve the establishment of a special account in support of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe and agree that a separate budget be presented for the Centre; and (b) to endorse the refinements to the standardized funding model for its future use in the start-up of new peacekeeping operations (A/69/651, para. 53). In addition, the Secretary-General presents a proposal for a second shared service centre (ibid., paras. 29-38). Upon enquiry the Advisory Committee was informed that the Secretary-General seeks General Assembly guidance on next steps or a decision on the options proposed. The Advisory Committee discusses these proposals under the relevant sections below.

Relationship with other management initiatives

13. Over the five-year implementation period of the global field support strategy, the Secretariat has been engaged in the concurrent implementation of a number of major interrelated and mutually supportive business transformation and change management initiatives. These include (a) the transition to International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), which, inter alia, required valuation and accounting of all global assets including those located in peacekeeping operations; (b) the deployment of an enterprise resource planning system for the United Nations, the first phase of which, Umoja Foundation, covering mainly IPSAS-related requirements, was piloted and implemented in peacekeeping operations in 2013; and (c) the deployment of a talent management system, Inspira, for workforce planning, staff selection and recruitment, performance management, learning and career development. Furthermore, implementation of the remaining phases of Umoja — Extensions 1 and 2 — which encompass human resources management and travel, and some of the more complex processes such as budget formulation, supply chain management and planning and programming functions, is ongoing and planned to be completed in 2018 (see General Assembly resolution 67/246, sect. III, paras. 25-26; see also A/67/360).

14. In addition, over the past years the General Assembly has approved a series of human resources proposals put forward by the Secretary-General which have affected peacekeeping personnel, in particular, the harmonization of the contractual arrangements and conditions of service of United Nations staff across the entire Secretariat. The General Assembly has also approved proposals made by the International Civil Service Commission for the common designation of family and

non-family duty stations across the United Nations common system, additional hardship allowance for staff serving in non-family duty stations, and an entitlement for rest and recuperation travel of field staff (General Assembly resolutions 63/250, 65/247 and 65/248).

15. More recent or upcoming proposals that are also related to the provision of support and service delivery matters include (a) the adoption of an information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/262, in which the Assembly acknowledged the importance of the strong central leadership of the Chief Information Technology Officer for the overall direction and performance of information and communications technology activities, and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to reduce the level of fragmentation of the current information and communications technology environment across the Secretariat and at all duty stations and field missions, and to provide detailed information for the implementation of the strategy for consideration at its seventieth session; and (b) the submission of a report by the Secretary-General containing his proposals for a global service delivery model for consideration by the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

16. The Advisory Committee notes that most of these initiatives are applicable Secretariat-wide, and that their successful implementation will require a holistic approach with close coordination among all Secretariat departments, offices and field missions. **The Advisory Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that any proposals put forward regarding future field support and service delivery improvements be well integrated and coordinated with all other related Secretariat reform initiatives in a manner that reinforces and multiplies their respective benefits, and avoids any duplication, wasteful use of resources and fragmentation of capacities. The Committee further emphasizes the need to ensure that the lessons learned during the implementation of the global field support strategy are fully understood across the Secretariat and incorporated in the upcoming proposals for the global service delivery model, as appropriate.**

17. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee considers that the implementation of Umoja — a unified, common and integrated system for the management of the financial, human and physical resources of the entire United Nations Secretariat, including field missions — creates opportunities for further integration and consolidation of service delivery. For instance, services such as education grant processing which are provided to all Secretariat staff could be provided centrally from a common service centre for United Nations staff at all duty stations.

III. Observations and recommendations on individual pillars of the global field support strategy

A. Strategic resourcing and financial framework pillar

18. Information on the end-state and performance indicators for the strategic resourcing and financial framework pillar as well as on the progress made towards 2015 end-state achievements is provided in the Secretary-General's overview report on peacekeeping operations (A/69/751, annex I, paras. 4-9). A total of five key performance indicators have been identified, of which two have already been

achieved. The performance indicators relate to (a) the percentage of peacekeeping missions receiving access to pre-mandate commitment authority; (b) the number of days between adoption of a Security Council resolution and approval of immediate funding and staffing arrangements; (c) IPSAS compliant financial reporting; (d) efficiencies and cost reductions achieved through planned measures; and (e) increasing resource implementation rates.

19. With regard to the achievement of efficiencies and cost reductions, the Secretary-General indicates that the annual reduction in average cost per uniformed personnel is 2 per cent between 2012/13 and 2013/14 and that a 1 per cent annual reduction in average cost is targeted by June 2015 (see A/69/751, table A.1). In the fifth progress report (A/69/651, paras. 12 (c) and (d)), the Secretary-General indicates that, over the five-year implementation period of the global field support strategy, field support has become leaner, from an average of 136 support and security staff for every 1,000 mission personnel in 2010/11 to fewer than 122 in 2013/14, and that field support operations are more cost-effective, the budgeted annual operational costs of United Nations peacekeeping having decreased by 10 per cent or $250 million from a total of $2.52 billion in support of 113,600 authorized uniformed personnel in 2010/11.

20. **While recognizing that the above-mentioned indicators reflect a straight average, the Advisory Committee is of the view that efforts should be pursued to further analyse the data with a view to gaining a better understanding of the underlying cost structure and factors influencing the evolution of support costs. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to refine his analysis with a view to establishing a clear definition and baseline for field support costs and developing a model for the scalability of support resources, which could be applied to the support account for peacekeeping operations, the Global Service Centre and the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe.** The Advisory Committee discusses scalability issues further in paragraphs 49 to 51 below.

Standardized funding model

21. In his fifth progress report (A/69/651, para. 53), the Secretary-General requests the General Assembly to endorse the refinements to the standardized funding model for its future use in the start-up of new peacekeeping operations, recalling paragraph 78 of the third annual progress report on the global field support strategy (A/67/633).

22. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in his first report on the global field support strategy, the Secretary-General indicated that the standardized funding model was intended to reflect a more homogeneous approach to operational support requirements, in particular in the early stages of a mission, when the deployment of resources is limited by what can be achieved initially (A/64/633, paras. 49-50).[1] Subsequently, the Secretary-General proposed (see A/65/696 and Corr.1) a

[1] Background information on the main elements of the standardized funding model is contained in annex III to the Advisory Committee's report on the budget for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 (A/66/592). An indicative timeline for the application of a standardized funding model to fund a new peacekeeping mission is shown in annex V to the Advisory Committee's report on the global field support strategy (A/64/660).

standardized funding model comprising six different levels of funding and staffing based on combinations of the number of authorized uniformed personnel (5,000, 10,000 or 15,000) and the area of operation and logistical challenges of the mission. He also proposed a timeline for the application of the standardized funding model to fund a new peacekeeping mission involving the following steps: (a) submission for concurrence by the Advisory Committee of an initial request for commitment authority within 30 days of mandate authorization; (b) submission for consideration by the General Assembly within 30 to 90 days of the establishment of the mission of an initial budget proposal prepared on the basis of the standardized funding model for the balance of the financial period of the first year of operation of the mission, taking into account the activities that could reasonably be accomplished during the period; and (c) submission of full budget proposals and performance reports in subsequent periods, based on existing procedures. By its resolution 66/264, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to apply the standardized funding model in the formulation of the initial budget of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

23. The standardized funding model was first applied to the start-up of UNMISS for the 2011/12 financial period (see A/66/532). The Advisory Committee did not consider UNMISS to be an adequate case to use to reliably assess the effectiveness of the standardized funding model approach to budget formulation in view of the Mission's absorption of assets, financial resources and personnel from the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (see A/66/592, para. 33).

24. In his subsequent progress report reflecting the first application of the standardized funding model, the Secretary-General stated that the standardized funding model was a successful tool because it had achieved a budget implementation rate of 99.9 per cent (see A/67/633, paras. 34-39). In its related report, the Advisory Committee expressed its view that the model's effectiveness cannot be properly assessed on the basis of the overall budget implementation rate alone, which is not an indicator of the efficient utilization of the resources provided or of the accuracy of the budgetary assumptions (A/67/780/Add.17, para. 11). In this connection, the Committee is of the view that a more useful and informative indicator might have been the implementation rate by category of expenditure. The Board of Auditors (A/67/5 (Vol. II)) also expressed a number of reservations on the first application of the model to UNMISS, noting that the frequent and widespread redeployments between groups and classes of expenditure (reflecting almost 70 per cent of the approved budget) were significantly higher in number than those for other missions during the first year of operations and that there were weaknesses in the monitoring and control of resource utilization in applying the standardized funding model at UNMISS. The Board also noted deficiencies in both the assumptions and the budget methodology underpinning the standardized funding model as well as in the application of the model. In his third report on the implementation of the global field support strategy (A/67/633), the Secretary-General proposed to revise the standardized funding model including through the incorporation of updated costs, and by implementing the technical observations of the Board of Auditors.

25. At the time of its consideration of the start-up budget for UNMISS for 2011/12 the Advisory Committee was informed that UNISFA, which was established almost concurrently with UNMISS, was not large enough to constitute a suitable fit under the mission profiles defined for the standardized funding model (see A/66/592, para. 28). In its cross-cutting report on peacekeeping operations (A/66/718) the Committee

expressed its view that the modalities of any such model should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate a wide range of operational requirements and conditions. The Committee further questioned whether the design of the model, limited to six profile/scenario combinations with an overall level of funding for each combination, might be too restrictive and therefore limit the application of the model to a narrow range of "typical" start-up operations.

26. The revised standardized funding model, including lessons learned, was applied for the second time to the start-up of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (see A/68/538; see also para. 24 above), as authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/286. In its related report (A/68/653) the Advisory Committee noted that the application of the revised standardized funding model had not resulted in a more streamlined budgetary process or in the timely submission of a proposed budget, which was submitted almost six months after the establishment of the Mission after two previous requests for financing arrangements through authorization to enter into commitments. The Committee further observed that the model might not be able to incorporate all relevant parameters, such as support provided by regional service centres or resource requirements for naval transportation. Even though such requirements were known at the time of the preparation of the budget, the application of the standardized funding model precluded their inclusion in the cost estimates of the Mission, requiring reallocation of funds within the total funding envelope. At the time of the preparation of the Advisory Committee's present report, the budget performance report for MINUSMA for the 2013/14 period had not been issued and the Committee was not able to assess actual performance against the budgeted amounts.

27. The Advisory Committee recalls that the standardized funding model was not applied to the start-up budget of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Following approval of two proposals for interim financing arrangements through commitment authority, a full budget proposal for 2014/15 was submitted by the Secretary-General on 31 October 2014, some 3.5 months after establishment of the Mission (A/69/557). The Advisory Committee was informed that the budget estimates had been prepared on the basis of high-level planning parameters for the Mission and with regard to typical structures for peacekeeping missions and past experience, and that the resulting estimates were similar in many ways to those that would have been generated if the standardized funding model had been applied. However, the resource requirements took into account the specific parameters of MINUSCA, such as actual and planned deployment schedules for uniformed and civilian personnel and aircraft, supported by underlying prices, unit costs and estimates.

28. To date the standardized funding model has been applied to the start-up of UNMISS and MINUSMA. **The Advisory Committee believes that in both cases the model proved to lack sufficient flexibility to adapt to the particular circumstances of the mission or take into account its known requirements at the time of the preparation of the budget proposals. Furthermore, the application of the model did not result in the submission of a budget within 30 to 90 days of the start-up or reduce the number of requests for interim financing arrangements. In the case of UNMISS, as noted above, the overall budget allocated was fully implemented, but with redeployments between groups and classes of expenditure totalling almost 70 per cent of the approved resources. At the same time, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the experience**

gained in developing a standardized approach to the start-up of missions, in analysing and refining cost parameters, and identifying the initial resources required to meet the urgent and achievable needs of field missions during the start-up period provides valuable lessons learned for the future. The Committee also considers that efforts should continue to analyse and standardize cost parameters with a view to facilitating the formulation of future start-up budgets as well as enhancing transparency and the cost-effective use of resources.

29. The Advisory Committee recalls that at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget for MINUSCA for 2014/15 (A/69/641) it had been informed that the resource requirements took into account the specific inputs for MINUSCA, including actual and planned deployment schedules for uniformed and civilian personnel, and aircraft, supported by underlying prices, unit costs and estimates, and were based on historical expenditure patterns and deployment patterns of recent start-up missions. **While noting the need to continue the efforts undertaken during the development of the funding model to analyse and standardize cost parameters (see para. 28 above), the Committee is of the view nevertheless that the approach taken in preparing the start-up budget of MINUSCA, which takes into account the specificities of the actual and planned deployment schedules of personnel and resources of each start-up mission, could constitute a more flexible and adaptable solution than the standardized funding model. Furthermore, the Committee notes that the above approach allowed timely submission of an initial budget for the establishment of MINUSCA and can be applied in the context of the existing budget process through which peacekeeping budgets are formulated, considered and approved. In view of the foregoing, the Advisory Committee sees no need for further development of the standardized funding model and recommends against endorsement of the refinements to the standardized funding model.**

B. Supply chain management and modularization

Supply chain management

30. Information on supply chain management is provided in the fifth progress report (A/69/651, paras. 39-47). The end-state and performance indicators for the supply chain management and modularization pillar, as well as information on the progress made towards 2015 end-state achievements, are provided in the Secretary-General's overview report on peacekeeping operations (A/69/751, annex I, paras. 17-23).

31. The Advisory Committee recalls that in his third annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy (A/67/633) the Secretary-General indicated that in August 2012 the Department of Field Support had commenced a formal process of developing a comprehensive supply chain management strategy aimed at the effective, responsive and efficient provision of goods and services required for mandate implementation. The fifth progress report indicates that a vision for supply chain management in field support has now been produced, along with an implementation road map which identifies four interlinked priorities. In the first phase, four short-term activities are envisaged, building on the work carried out in 2013/14 to establish a clearing-house function within the Global Service Centre. These include (a) an analysis of the East Africa corridor to identify opportunities to

improve the movement of supplies in this region, where the port of Mombasa is the main port of entry for sea-freight en route to missions in the region; (b) an improved acquisition planning process; (c) establishment of internal guidance for optimizing the use of international trade terms (INCOTERMS); and (d) implementation of centralized warehousing management based on best practices, to improve the quality and timeliness of recording of warehousing transactions, accuracy of inventory records, product availability, customer satisfaction, resource utilization and effective capacity management (A/69/651, paras. 43-47).

32. The Secretary-General indicates that full implementation of the supply chain management strategy will take place over several years, in phases. In its report (A/65/5 (Vol. II), paras. 318-321) the Board of Auditors noted that substantial delays had been experienced in the planning and implementation of the reforms in supply chain management and stressed the need to develop a plan to ensure mainstreaming of the supply chain reforms into the business processes of the Department of Field Support, the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe and field missions after the conclusion of the global field support strategy. **Given the importance of the initiative as well as the costs of its implementation (see para. 34 below), the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include in his next overview report on peacekeeping operations information on the implementation plan of the initiative, including details on its goals, timelines, key activities, milestones and project deliverables, costs and benefits, as well as baseline information and benchmarks for reporting on progress and assessing achievements. The Advisory Committee also emphasizes the need for a centralized approach under the leadership of the Department for Field Support to ensure that all activities being carried out across all missions in relation to the implementation of supply chain management are properly coordinated in the context of the above-mentioned road map (see also A/69/839).**

33. The Advisory Committee requested clarification on the reasons for setting a performance target as low as 51 per cent for the indicator of achievement "Percentage of non-expendable property items held in stock for more than six months" under expected accomplishment "Ageing stock" (A/69/751, table A.3). The Committee was informed that the target of 50 per cent with 5 per cent tolerance rate for this indicator was considered to be reasonable, given that this is a corporate level indicator encompassing all field missions, based on local market conditions and supply chain parameters such as procurement lead times, which exceed the six-month timeframe in some peacekeeping missions. However, it was expected that the implementation of supply chain management would improve performance of field missions in this regard, and the Department of Field Support intended to continuously monitor the performance results of all field missions and review performance targets accordingly. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the key performance indicator for ageing stock and other relevant indicators will be included in the performance management framework for the supply chain management initiative.**

34. In his overview report (A/69/751, paras. 236-240), the Secretary-General indicates that resources required to support the supply chain management initiative undertaken by the Department of Field Support across all field operations amount to some $4 million. A breakdown of the requirements by category of expenditure and mission is provided in tables 14 and 15 of the report. The Advisory Committee

comments on these proposals further in the context of its cross-cutting report on peacekeeping operations (A/69/839), as well as in its reports on the support account for peacekeeping operations and individual budget proposals of relevant missions.

Modularization

35. The Board of Auditors discusses progress on various activities under modularization and enabling capacities (see A/69/5 (Vol. II), paras. 326-337). It notes in particular certain discrepancies between the progress reported and actual achievements, as well as delays in the enabling capacities project. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to expedite the implementation of planned modularization and enabling activities in order to support the rapid deployment of modularized camps. He should also report comprehensively on achievements and outstanding activities in his final performance report on the global field support strategy, along with a plan for the mainstreaming of modularization activities in the processes of the relevant entities.**

36. **In addition, given that uniformed personnel are the main recipients of services provided through modularization activities, the Advisory Committee stresses the need to obtain feedback on the adequacy, quality and timeliness of the modularization services provided, as well as to conduct periodic customer satisfaction surveys and report on results (see also para. 43 below).**

C. Shared services pillar

37. In his fifth progress report the Secretary-General makes two proposals for further development of the shared services pillar beyond 2015: the first relates to the extension of shared services to cover all field missions, and the second to a new approach for the financing of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe (see A/69/651, paras. 21-38). The end-state and performance indicators for the shared services pillar, as well as information on the progress made towards 2015 end-state achievements is provided in the Secretary-General's overview report on peacekeeping operations (A/69/751, annex I, paras. 24-41).

38. The Secretary-General states that, over the course of the five-year implementation period of the global field support strategy, a new service delivery model has been defined and developed which no longer views each field mission as a stand-alone entity, but which prioritizes functional specialization at each level of the Organization, with different entities operating as part of a single field support system, thereby allowing a greater concentration of expertise and consistent service delivery.

39. The previous and new field support service delivery models are depicted in figures I and II of the fifth progress report, respectively. As indicated, the new model comprises four levels of support: (a) field support strategic direction and oversight functions are provided by Headquarters; (b) global operational support functions are provided either by Headquarters or the Global Service Centre; (c) administrative transactional functions, regional information and communications technology services and regional logistics cooperation are provided through shared services, delivered either through shared service centres or structured inter-mission support arrangements; and (d) location dependent services are provided at the

mission level. Figure II provides information on the functions encompassed under each level. Figure III of the fifth progress report provides information on the tools and working methods that have been developed or are being refined to support the new service delivery model.

40. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a table summarizing the support functions performed at each location (Headquarters, Global Service Centre (United Nations Logistics Base), Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, field missions) with an indication of any location-dependent factors, which is attached as annex I to the present report. **The Advisory Committee emphasizes the importance of establishing clear criteria for determining the optimum location from which to provide support functions and/or service lines, including location-dependency factors. The Committee also stresses the need for an effective methodology for assessing the advantages and disadvantages of relocating such functions to shared service centres, which should include a cost-benefit analysis with estimates of the projected initial investment, recurring costs, risk and mitigation factors, as well as information on the expected improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and cost savings, with baseline information and benchmarks for measuring progress.** The Committee has commented extensively on the issue of the relocation of functions from Headquarters or field missions to service centres in earlier reports on the global field support strategy (see A/65/743, paras. 164-168; A/66/718, paras. 235-237; see also para. 67 below).

41. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure alignment between the service delivery model developed for field support and the forthcoming proposals on a new global service delivery model, and also to ensure that the lessons learned during the implementation of the global field support strategy are fully considered and embedded, to the extent possible, in his proposals for a new global service delivery model (see para. 16 above).**

42. In its report (A/69/5 (Vol. II), paras. 338-358), the Board of Auditors notes that the Global Service Centre has not conducted surveys to ascertain client satisfaction ratings, nor does it maintain a log of complaints to help desks. Furthermore, the Centre has not established service level agreements with the missions to which it is providing services or developed operational key performance indicators for its service lines or corporate key performance indicators for shared services. With regard to the Regional Service Centre, the Board notes that two client satisfaction surveys have been conducted, in July 2013 and February 2014, but it questions the validity of the methodology used for analysing the results of the surveys and for computing average satisfaction scores, noting, for instance, that in certain cases responses had been ignored, while in others responses such as "partially satisfied" had been interpreted as a positive score, resulting in the overstatement of the levels of customer satisfaction.

43. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the provision of remote services must be accompanied by an effective customer relationship management system to track and report on issues/complaints, and that such *reporting* constitutes a key performance indicator for service centres. The Advisory Committee also considers the measurement of client satisfaction levels to be one of the most important indicators in the performance of service centres, which should serve as an important input in decision-making on the operations and**

resourcing of those centres. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the client survey process and methodology applied in conducting client satisfaction surveys and to put in place systematic, rigorous and objective processes for conducting, analysing and reporting on the results of client satisfaction surveys in a manner that provides assurances as to the integrity of the outcome reported. The Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that an effective and responsive mechanism is in place to track and follow up on client complaints in a timely fashion. The Advisory Committee also recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report comprehensively on this matter in his next and final performance report on the implementation of the global field support strategy.

Proposal for a second service centre

44. The Secretary-General proposes the extension of shared services to all field missions. He indicates that this approach helps to support standardized service delivery across missions, provides for business continuity, improves performance oversight and reduces the number of personnel in insecure environments. In his report (A/69/651, para. 23) he outlines the three ways in which services for field missions are being delivered at present in accordance with existing financial rules and regulations, in particular in the areas of (a) regional information and communications technology arrangements; (b) regional logistics cooperation arrangements; and (c) administrative transactional services. The Secretary-General states that administrative transactional services will remain at the core of shared services for field support and continue to be standardized and expanded to ensure that all missions will be supported with consistent and good quality services from off-site locations, in line with the future global service delivery model.

45. The Secretary-General proposes to establish a second shared service centre as a parallel entity to the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe. He develops his proposal in the fifth progress report (A/69/651, paras. 29-32) and proposes two broad options for determining an appropriate location for the new service centre should the General Assembly endorse his proposal to establish a second such centre, as set out below:

(a) The first option envisages building upon an existing United Nations field support infrastructure. The Secretary-General indicates that he assessed existing field support entities against a number of criteria (ibid., para. 35) and identified three viable options: the United Nations Office for West Africa, the Kuwait Joint Support Office, and the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi. The progress report (ibid., para. 37) provides some information on the advantages and disadvantages of each of the proposed locations. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a preliminary cost-benefit analysis conducted for each of the three options comparing infrastructure investments, costs of personnel, operational costs and savings, as well as a variety of qualitative factors such as security and stability; infrastructure and facilities; labour and workforce; host country relations; health and quality of life; accessibility; and ease of implementation.

(b) The second option proposed is that a wider analysis of possible alternatives be conducted over the coming year, beyond existing field support

locations, which would include a cost-benefit analysis and expected timelines for implementation, as well as any guidance received from the General Assembly, including guidance relating to the global service delivery model (ibid., para. 38). The results of this review would then be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly at its seventieth session, and a proposal for a second service centre would be prepared on the basis of guidance received from the Assembly.

46. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that experience to date in the provision of shared services has provided some positive results and favours its application to other field missions. The Committee also welcomes the efforts made thus far to identify options for service centre locations and to conduct a preliminary cost-benefit analysis taking into account a variety of quantitative and qualitative factors. The Committee further recalls that the Secretary-General is to present a proposal for a global service delivery model for consideration by the General Assembly at its seventieth session, as well as a detailed report on the implementation of the information and communications technology strategy adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/262. The Committee reiterates the need for a coherent approach to service delivery organization-wide that ensures synergies and sharing of infrastructure to the extent possible, while taking into account the specific requirements of different parts of the Organization, including peacekeeping. The Advisory Committee further stresses the need for cost-effective solutions that maximize savings.**

47. **In view of the foregoing, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to present, in the context of his forthcoming report on the global service delivery model, a comprehensive view of the overall service delivery requirements, including in peacekeeping. In this regard, the Committee emphasizes the need for a clear identification of location-dependent and location-independent functions as well as of business continuity requirements, taking into account the ongoing implementation of Umoja and other enterprise systems which are deployed centrally from the enterprise data centres and will replace the existing local systems that currently provide administrative functions. The Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to build on experience gained in the provision of shared services as a result of the implementation of the global field support strategy, the lessons learned and the work done thus far in this regard, including the Secretary-General's latest proposals. Any proposals presented should be based on a cost-benefit analysis. The Advisory Committee looks forward to receiving the Secretary-General's report on the global service delivery model.**

Financing of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe

48. The current financing mechanism for the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe has been in effect since the outset of the implementation of the global field support strategy, based on the assignment of mission posts and funding contributed from the budgets of participating missions. The Secretary-General proposes that this mechanism be replaced by a new approach modelled on established practice for the United Nations Logistics Base. Under this approach, the budget presented for the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe would be based on an appropriation to a special account to cover staffing, investment and operational costs of the Centre, with the approved appropriation to the Centre being apportioned to the assessment of

contributions for client peacekeeping missions. Further information on the proposal, including on disadvantages of the current arrangements and expected benefits of the proposed solution are provided in the fifth progress report (A/69/651, paras. 26-28).

49. The Secretary-General also indicates that a scaling model will be developed based on workload analysis from experiences with shared service provision to date, and will be presented in detail as the basis of a budget proposal for the Centre for 2016/17. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 64/269, by which it established the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, stressed that the establishment of a regional service centre must respect the principle of separate financial arrangements for missions and that its resources and the volume of its activities are scalable, reflecting the start-up, expansion, drawdown or closure of the field missions that it serves. This is particularly relevant in the light of the considerable fluctuations in peacekeeping staffing levels seen over recent budget periods.

50. The Advisory Committee sought further details on the above-mentioned scaling model but was not able to obtain sufficient details on the concept or mechanisms envisaged to provide effective scalability. **The Committee points out that the financing model proposed is based on current arrangements for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi which have not proved to be effectively scalable over time, in particular as regards a decrease in resource requirements of the Base during periods of drawdown or closure of field missions.**

51. **While recognizing that the consideration of separate budget and performance reports of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe would have some advantages such as improved visibility and oversight of the Centre's resources, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the Secretary-General's proposal needs further refinement, in particular the development of detailed proposals for a scalability model, which would also be applicable for adjusting the resource requirements of all service providers, including the support account for peacekeeping operations and the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi/Global Service Centre, as well as other service centres. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee is of the view that it will be necessary to present such a proposal for a scalability model for consideration by the General Assembly before, or at the same time as, any proposals regarding changes to the financing arrangements of the Regional Service Centre. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to present for consideration by the General Assembly concrete proposals for a scalability model of financing the resource requirements of the support account for peacekeeping operations, the Global Service Centre and the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe. Accordingly, at this stage, the Advisory Committee recommends against establishment of a special account for the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe and the presentation of a separate budget for the Centre. The Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to provide consolidated information on the financial and human resources provided by client missions to the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe for future budget cycles.**

D. Human resources pillar

52. The end-state and performance indicators for the human resources pillar, as well as information on the progress made towards 2015 end-state achievements, are provided in the Secretary-General's overview report on peacekeeping operations (A/69/751, annex I, paras. 10-16). A total of 14 key performance indicators have been defined in the areas of workforce planning, use of rosters, succession planning, improvements to the quality and stability of field staff, and a human resources data framework for reporting. In addition, the Secretary-General indicates that, under the end-state vision, the Field Personnel Division will shift from transactional and process-oriented functions to more strategic functions such as operational workforce planning, strategic advisory services, policy guidance and oversight of the implementation of delegated authorities and responsibilities.

53. In its report (A/69/5 (Vol. II), paras. 293-312) the Board of Auditors recalls that the recruitment and retention of personnel for field services was one of the important areas identified for the human resources pillar in the initial proposals for the global field support strategy, and that particular emphasis was placed on recruiting and retaining female staff so as to ensure improved gender balance at all levels. While acknowledging that initiatives have been taken to increase the representation of women, the Board observes that in 2014 the representation of women across categories was significantly lower than the target prescribed in 12 out of a total of 33 organizational units (departments, offices and missions), and in 14 of 37 organizational units with regard to the representation of women in senior positions (at the P-5 to D-2 levels). The Board also notes that a performance indicator to track the geographical distribution of staff at field missions has not yet been implemented as recommended in its previous report.

54. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will address the deficiencies noted by the Board of Auditors with regard to the human resources framework. It concurs with the Board's recommendation that action be taken in a time-bound manner to include a performance indicator to track the geographical deployment of staff at field missions.**

E. Regional Service Centre at Entebbe

55. Annex II to the overview report on the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/69/751) provides a summary of the performance of the Regional Service Centre during the 2013/14 financial period, as well as consolidated financial and human resources required for the operation of the Centre in 2015/16, and details on the share of the resources allocated to each client mission as reflected in the budget proposals of the respective missions.

1. Resources for the operations of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe

Budget performance for 2013/14

56. The approved resources for 2013/14 amounted to $39.0 million, financing a total of 332 posts, while expenditure amounted to $25.6 million, reflecting underexpenditure of $13.4 million, or 34.3 per cent (A/69/751, annex II, para. 9, table B.1). The underexpenditure is mainly due to lower than planned requirements under (a) international staff ($3.2 million or 13.1 per cent) owing to a higher

vacancy rate of 15.4 per cent for international staff compared with the budgeted rate of 5 per cent; (b) facilities and infrastructure ($7.1 million or 89.8 per cent) attributable mainly to the non-implementation of the planned construction projects for the Regional Service Centre in the 2013/14 period; (c) information technology ($0.9 million or 59.9 per cent) attributable mainly to the transfer of information technology equipment surplus from UNAMID to the Regional Service Centre; and (d) communications ($0.6 million or 45.6 per cent) owing to reduced requirements for the use of Internet services as well the non-procurement of spare parts.

57. As indicated in the report (A/69/751, annex II, para. 23), a total number of 332 posts (including 169 international posts) were approved for deployment to the Regional Service Centre from the client missions in 2013/14, reflecting an increase of 133 posts from the 199 posts approved for the 2012/13 period, during which a total of 160 posts were deployed to the Centre. The staffing of the Centre is distributed in five service delivery areas: allowance and payments, benefits and entitlements, financial reporting, the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre and the Regional Information and Communications Technology Service posts. An average of 270 posts were encumbered during the period, reflecting actual average vacancy rates of 15.4 per cent for international staff, 20.7 per cent for national General Service staff and 33.3 for United Nations Volunteers. The Secretary-General indicates that during the 2013/14 and 2014/15 periods the Centre has been focused on stabilizing its service delivery model following the implementation of IPSAS and Umoja Foundation.

Proposed requirements for 2015/16

58. The proposed resource requirements for the Regional Service Centre for 2015/16 are estimated at $36.8 million, reflecting a net decrease of $7.4 million, or 16.7 per cent compared with the resources approved for 2014/15. The decrease is mainly due to reduced requirements for (a) international staff ($10.0 million or 39.8 per cent) owing to the proposed net decrease of 69 international posts; and (b) facilities and infrastructure ($5.1 million or 48 per cent) attributable to the completion of the majority of the construction projects by the end of 2014/15. The decreased requirements would be offset in part by increased requirements under (a) national staff ($3.0 million or 98.5 per cent) attributable primarily to the net increase of 68 national posts; and (b) communications ($3.5 million or 244.7 per cent) and information technology ($1.4 million or 6.3 per cent), attributable mainly to the higher requirements for information and communications technology equipment to enable transactional administrative functions in support of 14 regional missions as well as centralized information and communications technology services, including regional business continuity and mobility. A summary of the financial requirements of the Regional Service Centre for the financial period 2015/16 with a breakdown of the contribution of each participating mission and other missions receiving services from the Centre by category of expenditure is provided in table B.10 of the report (A/69/751).

59. The proposed resources for 2015/16 would provide for a total of 386 posts, reflecting a net reduction of 18 posts as compared to 2014/15. The net reduction reflects the combined effect of a net reduction of 69 international posts and 17 United Nations Volunteers positions, offset by an increase of 68 national posts. The net decrease of 69 international posts results from the abolishment of seven Field Service posts and the addition of five P-3 and one P-2 posts, as well as the

nationalization of 68 Field Service posts. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a table showing the distribution of posts by functional area (administration, finance, human resources, logistics and information technology), with a breakdown by mission and year, which is attached as annex II to the present report.

60. Information on the main resource planning assumptions for 2015/16 is provided in the report (A/69/751, annex II, paras. 26-38). Among the main factors cited is the upcoming implementation of Umoja Extension 1, which will have a significant impact from November 2015 on the service lines for travel, payroll and human resources management for international staff and, from April 2016, on the service lines for the management of national staff, United Nations Volunteers and uniformed personnel. The Secretary-General also indicates that the staffing distribution of the Regional Service Centre was reviewed and is now prorated across all major client missions — UNMISS, MONUSCO, UNAMID, UNISFA and MINUSCA — as well as UNSOA (ibid., annex II, paras. 31-34 and 40-41). Tables B.4 and B.5 of the report show the realignment of posts in the Regional Service Centre in 2015/16 by mission and function.

61. Upon enquiry the Advisory Committee was provided with a table (see annex IV to the present report) showing (a) for the 2014/15 period, the budgeted vacancy rates, the actual rates as at 31 March 2105 and the actual average rates from 1 July 2014 to 31 March 2015; and (b) the proposed vacancy rates for 2015/16, as well as the proposed number of personnel. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that budgeted vacancy rates should be based, as much as possible, on actual vacancy rates. In cases where the proposed budgeted rates differ from the actual rates at the time of the budget preparation, clear justification should be provided in related budget documents for the rates used. In view of the foregoing the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to apply a vacancy rate of 17 per cent for national General Service posts and 50 per cent for national Professional Officer posts in the budgets of the missions that propose separate vacancy rates for their posts that are proposed to be located at the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe. Any related operational costs should be adjusted as appropriate.**

Budget implementation rates

62. Upon enquiry the Advisory Committee was provided with a table showing budget performance rates by year since the inception of the Centre, which is attached as annex III to the present report. The table shows wide variances — both under- and overspending — between the overall budgeted amounts and actual expenditure incurred, due mainly to differences in vacancy rates, delays in construction projects, and information technology and communications requirements.

63. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the high vacancy rates experienced in 2013/14 for international staff (see para. 56 above) were due in part to the need to divert resources to provide support to missions during the implementation of IPSAS in July 2013 and restriction of recruitment during a restructuring exercise undertaken in January 2014 for the creation of service lines. The Advisory Committee was further informed that the Centre had also experienced high staff turnover rates for international staff during the performance period as a

result of the low rates of post adjustment and of the allowance payable to United Nations Volunteers at Entebbe compared to the missions in the region. **The Advisory Committee recalls that the improvement to staff safety and quality of life was one of the key factors underpinning the initial proposal for the global field support strategy (see para. 14 above), in particular the establishment of service centres in family duty stations. The Committee recommends therefore that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide an analysis of the factors contributing to the vacancy rates for international staff at Entebbe. The Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to review and improve the planning process for estimating the future budgetary requirements of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, including staffing levels and vacancy rates.**

Construction projects

64. As indicated in paragraph 56 above, construction delays have had a significant impact on the budget performance rates of the Centre, resulting in high levels of underexpenditure. The Advisory Committee requested further information on the completion status or actual completion date of the construction of the two office buildings RSC 1 and RSC 2 and the conference centre referred to under expected accomplishment 1.10 (Effective and efficient support to the Regional Service Centre). The Advisory Committee was informed that the contract for design and construction of two office buildings had been extended to the end of January 2015 but that the contractor had failed to complete the project within that timeframe. Furthermore, the contract had expired and was being processed for closure by the Contract Management Section of the Legal Office and the Regional Procurement Office. The conference centre construction project had been put on hold by the Steering Committee of the Regional Service Centre pending further review. **The Advisory Committee recommends that updated information be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of this matter. The Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide a detailed update on the status of the above-mentioned construction projects and contracts in his next overview report.**

2. Services provided to client missions

Check-in and check-out

65. The indicators of achievement 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 under expected accomplishment 1.2 (Effective and efficient check-in/check-out support to clients) show weak performance for the check-out function for international staff and uniformed personnel: less than 15 per cent of all personnel were checked out within the targeted timeframe of one day for international staff and three days for uniformed personnel. In its report (A/69/5 (Vol. II), paras. 354-359), the Board of Auditors notes that approximately $2.26 million per annum is being incurred in relation to daily subsistence allowance in providing check-in and check-out services, which do not qualify as non-location-dependent services. Furthermore, an additional 11 officers from various missions receiving mission subsistence allowance at a rate of $116 per day are currently facilitating check-in and check-out processes for uniformed personnel at the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe.

66. **The Advisory Committee concurs with the recommendation of the Board that the Secretariat explore mechanisms to provide remote access to onboarding staff at the missions to enable them to complete formalities, thereby obviating the necessity of their visiting the Regional Service Centre, and to report on the additional expenditure incurred on daily/mission subsistence allowance as long as check-in and check-out services are provided from the Centre.**

67. **In this connection, the Advisory Committee is of the view that there is a need to further refine the criteria and process for determining whether functions or service lines can be performed remotely or are fully location-dependent, and to ensure that a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis is performed before the decision is taken to relocate functions to a service centre (see para. 40 above). While it recognizes that in some cases there may be a need to make adjustments in the light of experience, the Committee emphasizes the need for a responsive approach with rapid rectification of anomalous situations, especially when needless costs are being incurred. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to address this situation as a matter of priority and to ensure that the check-in and check-out functions are performed in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. The Secretary-General should also be requested to report comprehensively on this matter in his next overview report.**

Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre

68. The indicator of achievement 1.5.1 under expected accomplishment 1.5 (Effective and efficient regional troop movement support to clients), shows that the increase in the number of regional troop movement flights coordinated by the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre was not achieved in 2013/14, and that only 453 troop and police movement flights conducted during the period were coordinated by the Centre instead of the targeted number of 1,179 flights. Table II.20 of the report of the Board of Auditors (A/69/5 (Vol. II)) provides data on the utilization of the two aircraft under the tasking authority of the Centre, showing passenger payload factors of 29 and 53 per cent, significantly below the target of 70 per cent set out in the Aviation Manual.

69. The Advisory Committee requested clarification as to whether the outputs of the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre were affected by the decommissioning of aircraft under its tasking authority and whether assurances could be provided that the Centre would deliver the planned outputs. The Committee was informed that, in the absence of dedicated air assets under its tasking authority, the Centre will plan, coordinate, optimize and execute regional air transportation services utilizing the air assets from the regional missions in order to achieve the outputs planned. The Advisory Committee was further informed that the Department of Field Support had initiated an assessment of the roles and activities of the Air Transport Section within the Logistics Support Division at Headquarters in relation to the Strategic Air Operations Centre at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi and the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre, with a view to improving overall management of aviation. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include in his assessment a review of the composition of the services provided by the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre and**

the Strategic Air Operations Centre with a view to consolidating provision of the services centrally and avoiding any duplication. The Advisory Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide an update on the assessment process in his next overview report. The Advisory Committee comments further on the assessment process and air transportation issues in its cross-cutting report on peacekeeping matters (A/69/839) and its report on the proposed budget for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi (A/69/839/Add.9).

Regional Information and Communications Technology Services

70. The Secretary-General indicates that the Regional Information and Communications Technology Services unit was established in May 2013 at Entebbe with a view to eliminating duplication of effort; achieving economies of scale and scope; and removing disparity of service across missions through standardization. The Secretary-General indicates that the unit provides standard information and communications technology solutions to client missions to enable a mobile workforce and minimize the mission footprint, by centralizing common information and communications technology services.

71. Given the recent establishment of the unit, the results-based frameworks for 2013/14 do not include information on the unit's performance targets and indicators of achievement. The Secretary-General also indicates that the savings in information and communications technology accruing from regional information and communications technology have not yet been reported (A/69/751, annex I, para. 47). **In view of the foregoing the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide, in his final performance report on the implementation of the global field support strategy, further details on the costs and benefits arising from the establishment of the Regional Information and Communications Technology Services unit, including costs for infrastructure such as the technology centre referred to in the report (ibid., annex II, para. 38), as well as information on the related reduction in the resource requirements of the missions served by the unit, including requirements for staffing, contractual personnel, information and communications technology capacities such as data centres, server rooms and help desks. The Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide in his next report information on the capacities and division of labour among the Regional Information and Communications Technology Services unit, the information and communications technology units of the peacekeeping missions participating in the Regional Service Centre, and the Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies at the Global Service Centre, as well as on the coordination arrangements between these different providers of information and communications technology services.**

Support framework performance

72. **The performance framework for the 2013/14 period (A/69/751, annex II, paras. 4-8) shows that the performance targets were not achieved or only partially achieved in a large number of cases, which in the Advisory Committee's view is indicative of either poor planning or poor quality of service. While recognizing that the Centre has been involved in the implementation of major business transformation initiatives such as IPSAS and Umoja, the**

Advisory Committee notes that it is already in its fourth year of operation. The Advisory Committee is of the view that there is a need for greater focus on achieving improved performance and quality of service, as well as higher levels of customer satisfaction (see para. 43 above). The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to prioritize improvement of performance and provision of high-quality and timely support services to the client missions of the Centre, and to put into place appropriate mechanisms for assessing progress over time, including clear objectives and baselines.

Support to the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response

73. Upon enquiry the Advisory Committee was informed that, at the request of the Department of Field Support, the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe had deployed an advance team of six staff to provide immediate support for the deployment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) for a six-week period during which the Mission established a capacity to support itself. At the end of the six-week period and after full handover to the local team for mission-specific functions, the Centre had established focal points under the different service lines with a view to providing dedicated capacity for services to UNMEER. The Advisory Committee was also provided with a list of the specific support functions provided by personnel of the Centre to UNMEER, which is attached as annex V to the present report. The Advisory Committee will comment further on this matter in its forthcoming report on the proposed budget for UNMEER.

F. Benefits reporting

74. The overview report provides information on the qualitative benefits achieved in 2013/14 in missions and the financial costs and benefits derived from the implementation of the global field support strategy over its five-year implementation period (A/69/751, annex I, paras. 44-49). The report also provides some information on future projected benefits. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the efforts made to report on the qualitative and quantitative benefits of the global field support strategy.**

75. Table A.5 of the report provides data on the costs, savings and cost reductions attributed to the global field support strategy from 2010 to 2014 by financial period. The net savings and cost reductions reported amount to $424.5 million, reflecting total costs of $19.4 million and total savings of $443.9 million. The table provides a breakdown of the costs incurred at Headquarters, at the Global Service Centre and the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe. The savings realized are grouped under personnel, asset management (strategic deployment stocks reduction and consumption efficiencies) and movement optimization with further breakdowns by category of expenditure.

76. The Advisory Committee notes that most of the savings reported were realized during the 2012/13 financial period. It recalls that in his overview report on the financing of peacekeeping operations for the 2012/13 period (A/66/679) the Secretary-General reported savings of some $370 million arising from the work of the resource efficiency group and a new approach for managing resources under the global field support strategy. In its report (A/69/5 (Vol. II), paras. 287-292) the

Board of Auditors noted that the resource efficiency group had held only two meetings, on 3 May and 11 July 2012. **The Advisory Committee concurs with the recommendation of the Board of Auditors that the resource efficiency group be reconstituted with a clearly defined role and responsibilities complementing the other structures already in place to ensure the regular review of efficiency measures across the field in order to incorporate practical benefits and savings under the global field support strategy.**

77. Information on the qualitative benefits achieved in 2013/14 in missions is presented under the following groups: (a) expediting and streamlining service delivery to field operations; (b) strengthened resource stewardship and accountability; greater efficiencies and economies of scale; (c) staff safety and quality of life improvements; and (d) reduction in environmental impact; utilization of regional/local capacity. The Advisory Committee appreciates the information provided on the qualitative benefits realized by individual missions. In this connection the Advisory Committee recalls that one of the key objectives of the global field support strategy was to improve the quality and timeliness of the services provided to the military, police and civilian components of field missions. As the five-year implementation period of the strategy draws towards a close, the Advisory Committee considers it important to assess the overall improvements achieved in this regard. **The Advisory Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide in his final performance report an overall assessment of the improvements achieved in the quality and timeliness by service line across all recipients of those services.**

78. In the overview report (A/69/751, para. 137), the Secretary-General indicates that the long-range passenger airlift initiative has entered its third year and, owing to optimal utilization, achieved cost savings of approximately $6 million in 2013/14, in addition to the savings of about $8 million in the previous financial year. In this connection the Advisory Committee recalls that in its last report it had recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to entrust the Office of Internal Oversight Services with an independent audit of the reported costs and benefits and make the results of that audit available to the Assembly in the next reporting cycle (A/68/782, para. 186). Upon enquiry the Advisory Committee was informed that, pending General Assembly endorsement of that recommendation, the third-party review had not commenced. **The Advisory Committee believes that independent certification of the reported costs and quantitative benefits of the global field support strategy should be provided to the General Assembly. The Committee intends to request the Board of Auditors to conduct such a certification exercise in the context of its audit of the final performance report on the implementation of the global field support strategy including the long-range passenger airlift initiative, and to report on its findings in its next report on United Nations peacekeeping operations.**

G. Governance and project management

79. In his first report, the Secretary-General stated his intention to develop a detailed implementation plan and more elaborate proposals for achieving the objectives of the global field support strategy. However, as noted by the Board of Auditors, the global field support strategy continued for three years of its five-year implementation period without a clearly defined end-state vision or a sufficiently

detailed implementation plan to realize that vision (A/67/5 (Vol. II), paras. 170-171). The Board also pointed to weaknesses in project, risk assessment, benefits and cost management (ibid., paras. 181-200). As indicated in paragraph 5 above, a refined end-state vision for each pillar of the strategy was presented in the context of the fourth progress report, when approximately 18 months remained until the end of the five-year implementation period of the strategy.

80. The Secretary-General set out the governance and project management arrangements for the implementation of the global field support strategy in his second progress report (A/65/643, paras. 4-5). Further details on the governance framework of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe were provided to the Advisory Committee upon request, and were included in the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/65/743, annex IX). The Board of Auditors commented on the project governance arrangements, pointing to weaknesses in a number of areas (A/67/5 (Vol. II), paras. 172-180). In its latest report (A/69/5 (Vol. II), paras. 257-261), the Board of Auditors discussed programme coordination issues, noting in particular that the global field support strategy Steering Committee has not met on a regular basis.

81. **The Advisory Committee believes that effective governance and project management arrangements are essential for the successful implementation on time and within budget of major business transformation and change management initiatives and the achievement of their objectives. It also stresses the importance of establishing at the outset a comprehensive implementation plan which sets out clear goals, timelines, key activities, milestones and project deliverables, with baseline information and benchmarks for reporting on progress and assessing achievements (see A/64/660, para. 159). The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include in his final performance report an assessment of the adequacy of the governance and project management arrangements in place during the implementation of the global field support strategy, with a view to identifying lessons learned for the future.**

H. Conclusions and recommendations

82. **Subject to the comments and recommendations made in the present report, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the progress report of the Secretary-General.**

Annex I

List of support functions by location

Type of function	*Location*	*Location dependency*	*Main functions*
Field support strategic direction and oversight functions	Headquarters	Location dependent (Headquarters)	Strategic direction, operational policy and guidance development, operational standards and systems standardization, new mission planning, oversight and compliance, quality assurance, senior leadership, field capacity-building, field advocacy in policy decisions, Member State interaction
Global operational support functions	Global Service Centre and Headquarters[a]	Location dependent (Headquarters and Global Service Centre)	Global contracts management, global acquisition planning, Field Technology Operations Centre, remote GIS support, strategic deployment stocks/United Nations reserve management, strategic air movement monitoring, Member State operational interactions, uniformed personnel movements, field roster management
Administrative transactional services	Regional Service Centre at Entebbe (and new service centre)	Non-location dependent	Finance and human resource services, transactional, process-oriented and standardized. For functions of field support administrative service centres, see A/69/651, footnote 3
Regional information communications technology services	Regional Service Centre at Entebbe (for Central/East Africa); support for Middle East missions; Global Service Centre — Field Technology Operations Centre	Non-location dependent, but regional proximity highly relevant	Sharing of infrastructure and best practices; ensuring consistency in the development/implementation of standards and service delivery

Type of function	*Location*	*Location dependency*	*Main functions*
Regional logistics cooperation and other activities that may be pooled in support of regional missions	Does not necessarily have a physical structure, the solution may vary depending on the level of integration in the region and the nature of the specific activity	Regionally location dependent	For logistics/supply chain activities these activities would be for improving efficiency and effectiveness through agreement among some missions within a particular geographic region. Examples would include movement coordination and planning, aviation safety etc. For other cooperation activities these might include regional training/ conferencing facilities, pooling of conduct and discipline or other capacities that could be shared part-time among a number of missions
In-mission functions	Missions	Location dependent	Support related advisory services to mission leadership, facilities/ infrastructure development and management, medical and occupational health/safety services, environment management, welfare, compliance risk, audit, in-mission transport, troop/unit rotation, contingent-owned equipment inspection, front-end geospatial and information communications technology solutions and services, United Nations asset management (through life-cycle), provision of life support and other supply items, recruitment, post management, workforce planning, staff advisory functions, training, budget development and execution, trust fund management

[a] Although certain global operational support functions do not in principle need to be conducted from Headquarters, Member States have wanted these functions to remain at Headquarters (e.g. uniformed personnel movements, field roster management, systems contracts management and all activities requiring significant Member State interaction).

Annex II

Regional Service Centre at Entebbe: posts by function, mission and year

	Pool by function						
Mission year	*Initial Regional Service Centre*	*Administration*	*Finance*	*Human resources*	*Logistics*	*Information technology*	*Total*
MINUSCA							
2014/15		4	37	14			55
2015/16			-12	1			-11
Grand total MINUSCA	–	**4**	**25**	**15**	–	–	**44**
MONUSCO							
2011/12	14						14
2012/13			19	19			38
2013/14			32	26	2		60
2014/15						6	6
2015/16		2	-2	7			7
Grand total MONUSCO	**14**	**2**	**49**	**52**	**2**	**6**	**125**
UNAMID							
2011/12	11						11
2012/13			13	26			39
2013/14			28	23	1	4	56
2014/15						6	6
2015/16		-1	-2	-5			-8
Grand total UNAMID	**11**	**-1**	**39**	**44**	**1**	**10**	**104**
UNMISS							
2011/12	14						14
2012/13			38	45			83
2013/14			4	4	1		9
2014/15						2	2
2015/16		-1	-10	-6			-17
Grand total UNMISS	**14**	**-1**	**32**	**43**	**1**	**2**	**91**
UNSOA							
2013/14			5	2		1	8
2014/15						1	1
2015/16			2	2			4
Grand total UNSOA	–	–	7	**4**	–	**2**	**13**

	Pool by function						
Mission/year	*Initial Regional Service Centre*	*Administration*	*Finance*	*Human resources*	*Logistics*	*Information technology*	*Total*
UNISFA							
2014/15 (advance deployment)			2				2
2015/16			4	3			7
Grand total UNISFA	–	–	**6**	**3**	–	–	**9**
Grand total Regional Service Centre at Entebbe	**39**	**4**	**158**	**161**	**4**	**20**	**386**

Abbreviations: MINUSCA, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; MONUSCO, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; UNAMID, African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur; UNISFA, United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei; UNMISS, United Nations Mission in South Sudan; UNSOA, United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Annex III

Budget execution rates for inception of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe

			Variance		
Financial year	*Appropriation*	*Expenditure*	*Amount*	*Percentage*	*Reasons for variance*
2011/12	9 334.0	6 119.8	3 220.1	35	Underexpenditure mainly due to delays in establishing contracts for various projects and higher actual vacancy for international and national staff.
2012/13	28 176.0	34 093.4	(5 917.4)	(21)	Increased requirements were mainly due to the unbudgeted construction of the two office buildings and one regional training centre that were planned but not executed in 2011/12 period and unbudgeted support provided for the deployment of information technology solutions in the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, such as the Field Support Suite, the Customer Relationship Management modules, content management and project management tools.
2013/14	38 960.8	25 595.1	13 365.6	34	Reduced requirements were mainly due to high overall vacancy rates for national and international staff and non-implementation of planned construction projects at the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe due to logistical challenges and delays in procurement processes, resulting in low implementation rates compared to the budgeted.

Annex IV

Actual and proposed vacancy rates

(Percentage of approved strength)

	2013/14[a]		2014/15[b]			2015/16	
Category	*Budgeted*	*Actual*	*Budgeted*	*Actual average 1 July 2014 to 31 March 2015*	*Actual as at 31 March 2015*	*Projected vacancy rates*	*Proposed number of personnel*
International staff	5.0	15.4	5.0	10.0	14.0	5.0	101
National staff							
National Professional Officers	15.0	0.0	5.0	85.0	85.0	15.0	30
National General Service staff	15.0	20.7	5.0	19.0	3.0	15.0	249
United Nations Volunteers	10.0	33.3	5.0	56.0	65.0	2.0	6

[a] National Professional Officers vacancy rate applied: 15 per cent to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and 0 per cent to the other missions.

[b] National Professional Officers vacancy rate applied: 5 per cent to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), 2 per cent to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 0 per cent to the other missions.

Annex V

Support provided by the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe to the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response

A. Regular Regional Service Centre support functions

- Onboarding
- Check-in
- All official travels
- All immediate payments (daily subsistence allowance advance, vendors payment, etc.)
- Initiate business partner profile in Umoja for personnel
- Payroll and management of Progen profiles

B. Immediate administrative and other support functions

Establishing a welcome centre for the purpose of:

- o Registering/checking-in personnel
- o Providing a welcome package with list of accommodations
- o Providing a brief explanation of benefits and entitlements
- o Providing a list of services performed in Accra and contacts

C. Establishing the initial information technology applications that support the administrative processes

- Field Support Suite for check-in and check-out
- Field Support Suite for ePT8 and eF10
- Field Support Suite for eMOP
- Latt-e or iNeed for performance monitoring
- Umoja for payment processes (including a cheque printer)
- Payment system through banking